BENGAL
DISTRICT
GAZETTEERS

BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

SARAN.

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PREFACE.

I DESIRE to acknowledge the valuable assistance I have derived in compiling this volume from the Sāran Survey and Settlement Report (1903) by Mr. J. H. Kerr, I.C.S., much of which has been reproduced in the form adopted for the Gazetteer.

L. S. S. O'M.

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GAZETTEER

OF THE

SARAN DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION. THE district of Sāran, which forms one of the north-western districts of the Patna Division, is situated between 25° 39′ and 26° 39′ north latitude and between 83° 54′ and 85° 12′ east longitude. It contains an area of 2,674 square miles, as ascertained by the latest survey, and a population, according to the census of 1901, of 2,409,509 persons. The principal town and administrative headquarters is Chaprā, situated on the north bank of the river Gogrā, close to its junction with the Ganges, in 25° 47′ N. and 84° 44′ E.

Origin of name. The origin of the name Sāran is doubtful. General Cunningham was at one time of opinion that it was derived from the Sanskrit word *sarana*, meaning an asylum or refuge, and connected it with a legend of Buddha overcoming and converting certain evil demons who lived on human flesh. "The demons," he says, "embraced Buddhism, or as it was expressed by the ancient Buddhists, sought the refuge or asylum of the three Precious Ones, *i.e.*, of the Buddhist Triad, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha." To commemorate the conversion of the demons of the desert, Asoka erected a stūpa, which General Cunningham concluded must have been called the Sarana or Asylum Stūpa, adding that "it must have been one of considerable celebrity, as there can be little doubt that its name was eventually imposed on the district in which it stood."* He subsequently, however, changed his opinion regarding the position of this stūpa and considered that the site must be looked for near Arrah in the Shāhābād district.† Another and more plausible derivation which has been suggested

* Ancient Geography of India (1871), page 440.
† Reports, Arch. Surv. Ind., vol. iii, 1873.

is that the name is a corruption of Saranga-aranya or the deer forest; this explanation being based on a local legend that in prehistoric times a holy recluse, named Rishi Sringī, had his hermitage at Singahī, a few miles east of Chaprā, in the midst of a dense forest full of deer. Yet another suggestion which has been put forward is that Sāran is a corruption of Sakra-aranya, *i.e.*, the forest of Sakra or Indra, which formerly covered the country round Visāla, where king Sumati entertained Rāma when he was proceeding with Vishwāmitra from Ajodhyā to Mithilā.*

Boundaries. The district is a wedge of alluvial soil thrust in between the Ganges, Gogrā and Gandak rivers. The Gandak separates it on the north-east from the district of Champāran and on the south-east from Muzaffarpur; on the south the Ganges forms the boundary, dividing it from the Patna and Shāhābād districts; while the western and north-western boundaries march with the United Provinces. The Gogrā, running parallel with the Gandak, meets the Ganges near the headquarters station of Chaprā, and forms the boundary between Sāran and the Ballia district on the south-west, while an irregular base-line drawn north-east from the Gogrā to the Gandak constitutes the western and north-western boundary between this district and the Gorakhpur district of the United Provinces. On this side alone can there be said to be a fixed boundary; for along the greater part of the perimeter of the district, the mid-stream of the Gogrā, Ganges and Gandak forms a constantly changing boundary, as these great rivers are perpetually oscillating from side to side and necessitating frequent changes in jurisdiction.

Configuration. In shape, the district resembles an isosceles triangle, the sides of which have an aggregate length of nearly 280 miles. The base, which is very irregular and about 90 miles in length, lies towards the north-west; the sides are formed by the Gandak, 95 miles long, and by the Gogrā and the Ganges, which also have a combined length of about 95 miles; and the apex is formed by the junction of the Gandak and the Ganges, towards Sonpur at the south-east corner. The district forms a wide alluvial plain, bounded by great rivers and intersected by numerous water-channels, which flow in a south-easterly direction and carry off the drainage of the country. They generally run along levels higher than the adjacent land, which is therefore liable to inundation whenever they overtop their banks. Beneath these high banks lie the basins in which the surface drainage primarily collects, to be discharged into the rivers in their lower reaches. Such depressions,

* W. Hoey, Litt. D., I. C. S., *On the identification of Kusinārā. Vaisāli and other places mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims*, J. A. S. B., Vol. LXIX, 1900.

locally known as *chaurs*, cover large areas in the south and south-east of the district.

There is a very gradual slope from the north-western corner, where Kuchai Kot, the highest point in the district, is 222·51 feet above mean sea-level, to Sonpur in its north-eastern corner at the junction of the Ganges and Gandak, where the height is only 168·32 feet above sea-level, giving a difference of 54·19 feet. The slope is almost imperceptible, averaging only 8 inches a mile, and the district thus presents the appearance of a level plain without hills or natural eminences and with hardly any elevation, except the mounds which mark the sites of old fortresses or of deserted villages. It is, however, beautifully wooded, and mango groves abound. Thirty years ago it was said that the people had a passion for planting them, so much so that the rainfall at Chaprā was decreasing owing to the number of groves with which the town was being surrounded. At present, the demand for timber on the one hand and for arable land on the other, and the facilities afforded to the cultivators of disposing of their rights in them, are leading gradually to a depletion of these orchards.

There is little or no waste land, and the district, which is densely populated, has long been noted for the high state of its cultivation. The wide expanses of low land along the banks of the rivers produce magnificent cold weather crops, but the autumn harvest is rendered precarious by the rivers overflowing their banks during the rainy months, when the maize crop is approaching maturity. One side of the district is now, however, completely protected against flood by the Gandak embankment; and the Gogrā and railway embankments afford partial protection on the other. Some parts still continue liable to be submerged, either by the local rivers and channels directly overflowing their banks, or by the flood waters of the larger rivers forcing their way up them. At the same time, it is open to question whether the girdling of the district with embankments would be an unmitigated benefit, both because complete exclusion of river water would deprive the land of part of its irrigation supply, as well as of a fertilizing deposit of silt, and also because embankments, if not pierced by a sufficient number of sluices, prevent the water from flowing off, with the result that floods take longer to subside than they otherwise would.

Natural divisions.

Though the district presents the appearance of a level plain, the uniformity of which is broken here and there by the depressions and marshes dotted over the country, it may be divided into three distinct tracts, viz., the alluvial lowlands adjoining the great rivers, which are liable to be submerged periodically; the

upland tract, which is remote from their influence; and the *diāra* lands in the beds of these rivers. The first two divisions call for no special description. They merge imperceptibly into one another, and there is no prominent feature to distinguish them, though their composition is different, the former being composed of new alluvium, in which sand is found, and the latter of old alluvium, which in many places contains the nodular limestone known as *kankar*. The *diāra* lands, however, call for a more detailed description, as they play an important part in the agricultural economy and administrative system of the district.

Diāras. The creation of these *diāras* or *chars*, as they are also called, is an interesting example of soil formation. Some back-water or curve of the river bed sets up an eddy in the current, which thereupon becomes sufficiently stationary to deposit a portion of the sand which it holds in solution. The level of the *diāra*, which is so far nothing but a heap of sand, then gradually rises as the water lying stagnant spreads a thin layer of clay and silt over the sand; and this deposit of silt deepens at every high flood, until at last the *diāra* rises above flood-level. The soil of such a *diāra* is extremely fertile, and grows magnificent crops; but if its growth is arrested by the river altering its course, so that the flood-water does not cover it during the second stage of its formation, it remains sandy and barren. Some *diāra* lands are the most fertile in the district, producing fine *bhadoi* crops before the river rises and good *rabi* crops in the cold weather. Other *diāras* again may be all sand, and the good field of one year may be ruined by a deposit of sand the next. Cultivation on *diāras* is thus often a mere speculation.

Both riparian and river islands are constantly being destroyed and re-formed as the rivers sway from side to side, now eroding the land and now forming it. At one place, the river is cutting into its bank and washing away village sites and groves; at another point the shore is receiving a new alluvial deposit to fill up the void left by the receding waters. Here, for instance, the Gogrā may be encroaching on the Sāran side, and a little further down it sweeps round and cuts into the Ballia district, now throwing up extensive *diāras* and now destroying them, as it tears down and cuts out new channels. These lands are the subject of perpetual dispute and frequent riots entailing litigation, which is of a complex nature owing to the difficulties of knowing whether the land is an accretion or a re-formation *in situ* and to the absence of fixed landmarks, as the great rivers every year carry on a continual process of destruction and renewal.

As mentioned above, there are three great boundary rivers, the Ganges, Gandak and Gogrā, which are navigable by large boats all the year round. There is also a network of minor streams flowing into the Gogrā or Ganges, many of which are fed by the overflow of the Gandak and dry up in the hot weather. These smaller streams, which divide the district into several fairly well marked portions, comprise the Jharahī, Khanwā, Dāhā, Gandakī, Dhanai, Gangrī and Khatsā: the Dāhā, Gandakī, Dhanai and Gangrī, all of which rise near the Gandak embankment, have been utilized for what is known as the Sāran canal system, which will be described in Chapter V. Each of these principal streams has numerous small tributaries, which, as a rule, take their rise in large swamps called *jhīls*. For the most part, they are mere overflow channels, which relieve the lowlands of surplus water in the rains, and at other seasons of the year dry up, leaving stagnant pools or marshes in the deeper portions of their beds. RIVER SYSTEM.

Alluvion and diluvion are constantly taking place along the banks of the Ganges, Gogrā and Gandak. One bank of the river, on which the current strikes, is generally high and abrupt, while the other is shelving; but these characteristics are generally reversed in a short space of time. The high bank is gradually eaten away, and the current then turns to the opposite side, where a similar process is repeated. Further down, large sand banks form one year and are swept away the next, and transfers of land to and from this and other districts are consequently frequent. The Gogrā is, throughout its course, proverbial for the number and varieties of these changes; and they also occur, though to a less extent, in the Ganges and Gandak.

The beds of the rivers are generally sandy, and the banks are cultivated as near to the water's edge as possible. Along the channels of the larger rivers, there are often wide expanses of low land, which are flooded in the rains, but are sown later in the year with spring crops, which always turn out well, owing to the rich layer of silt annually deposited. In some places during the dry season there is often a belt of tamarisk jungle between the river and the cultivated fields, and this is the first step in the conversion of the sandy riverain into arable soil.

The following is a brief description of the principal rivers.

The Ganges forms the southern boundary of the district from a few miles below Chaprā, where it is joined by the Gogrā, to its confluence with the Gandak at Sonpur. In the cold weather, its width is about one mile on an average; but in the rains it extends far beyond this limit, and is often 9 or 10 miles broad. Great changes have taken place in its course since 1849, when it Ganges.

was surveyed from Patna upwards to its confluence with the Gogrā. The maps of that date mark this junction at a spot half-way between Mānjhi and Revelganj, some 13 miles above the present point of union, which takes place about 6 miles below Revelganj. There are numerous sand banks and islands of considerable size in the bed and along the banks of the river; but it is useless and hardly possible to describe their position, as they often disappear and are re-formed on other sites in successive years. As a rule, the banks from Sonpur to Chaprā are high and above flood level; but the lowlands which lie behind these banks are regularly inundated every year by the Ganges floods, which force their way through the drainage openings in its banks, and so spreading over the inland country, fill the large *chaurs* or marshes which are so prominent a feature of the south and south-east of the district. There are ferries at Sherpur, Pānāpur and Mahendra Ghāts, besides a steam ferry running between Pahlezā Ghāt and Dīgha Ghāt in the Patna district in connection with the Bengal and North-Western Railway.

Gogrā.

The Gogrā forms the south-western boundary of the district from near Ghiāspur 5 miles south of Guthnī, to its confluence with the Ganges, 6 miles south-east of Chaprā. Its total length in Sāran is about 60 miles. The principal places on its banks are Revelganj, one of the largest trade centres in the district, Daraulī, Mānjhi, and Domaigarh, where boats are built and large quantities of *sāl* wood are sold. Chaprā, the administrative headquarters of the district, which formerly overlooked the Ganges, is also now situated close to the bank of this river. The tongue of land, which forms the extreme eastern portion of the Ballia district and separates these two great waterways, has pushed eastwards some 10 miles during the past half century and has carried in the same direction the confluence of the rivers to a considerable distance below Chaprā. During the rains, however, the flood waters of both the Ganges and Gogrā submerge this sandy promontory, and direct boat communication between Chaprā and Arrah on the south of the Ganges is temporarily re-established.

In many places the banks are high, and elsewhere there are private embankments; but the Gogrā, like the Ganges, often inundates the country, by forcing its way up the small drainage channels. Navigation is easy, and a large river-borne trade is carried on; river steamers from Patna ply as far as Ajodhyā, calling at many places and competing with the railways both for goods and passenger traffic. It is navigable as far as that place by the largest boats as well as by light draught steamers, and as far as Nepāl by country boats of light and medium capacity.

The name Gogrā, or as it is also called Ghagrā, is a corruption of the Sanskrit *gharghara*, an onomatopœic word descriptive of rattling or laughter, which may be translated as the gurgling river. It is also called the Sarju or Sarayu (the Sarabos of Ptolemy) and the Dehwā.

Gandak. The Gandak forms the north-eastern boundary of the district from the village of Khargaulī to Sonpur, where it falls into the Ganges, a distance in a straight line of nearly 95 miles. It is a snow-fed stream, issuing from the lower Himālayan hills at Tribenī Ghāt in the north-west of Champāran, but soon acquires the character of a deltaic river. The banks are generally on a higher level than the adjacent country, a fact which has had considerable influence on the prosperity of Sāran, as before the construction of the embankment floods used often to overtop them inundating large tracts of land. It has no tributaries in its course through the plains; and the drainage of the country generally sets not to it but from it, being conveyed away by several channels which cross the district, and ultimately make their way into the Ganges. Of all the snow-fed streams in this part of Bengal, the Gandak pours the largest volume into the Ganges, its flood discharge being 550,000 cubic feet per second, and its minimum discharge 6,000 cubic feet per second. It is estimated, however, that when the Tribenī Canal, now under construction in the Champāran district, is completed, one-third if not one-half of the water-supply will be taken off. At present, the river is still navigable by boats drawing 2 to 5 feet of water. It is well adapted for down-stream navigation, but, owing to the rapidity of the current and the presence of snags, navigation up-stream is tedious and dangerous.

There are no important river marts on its banks in Sāran; the principal *ghāts* or landing-places are Salīmpur, Sattar, Sarangpur, Sohānsi, Sohāgpur, Rewā, Barwā, Saraiyā and Sonpur. The river is embanked on both sides throughout its course from Tribenī, where it leaves the hill country, as far as Sonpur, where it flows into the Ganges. At Sonpur it is spanned by a railway bridge 2,176 feet long, which is regarded as a triumph of engineering skill in consequence of the rapidity of the stream when in flood and the unstable nature of the river bed.

Jharahi. The Jharahī rises at Manpurā in the Gorakhpur district and flows into Sāran near Koesā. After passing through *pargana* Kaliānpur Koāri, it forms the western boundary between Sāran and the United Provinces for about 9 miles, and eventually falls into the Gogrā near Daraulī, after a total course of 52 miles, of which 40 miles are in this district. Among the places it passes

are Husepur, the former home of the Hathwā Rājās, and Mairwā, but it conveys little or no traffic.

Khanwā. The Khanwā is entirely fed from large marshes in Gorakhpur, and forms the boundary between that district and Sāran, from within a few miles from its source as far as Mohanpur, whence it flows for 10 miles in Sāran. It then re-enters Gorakhpur and flows through that district to Mahyā, where it again forms the Sāran boundary up to Dumriā. Its total length is 56 miles, and it finally falls into the Gogrā. The banks are very high, and except in one or two places, are not topped by floods. Its water is consequently little used for irrigation, the lift necessary being too great. For 12 miles above Kodī Siddhī the stream is never dry, and boats of 300 maunds burden can always reach that village.

Dāhā. The Dāhā, also known as the Sundī, rises near the large village of Kuchai Kot, a little to the south of the Gandak embankment; and after passing Mīrganj, Siwān, and Andar, flows into the Gogrā at Tājpur, about 6 miles to the north-west of Mānjhi police-station. At present, its source is about 8 miles distant from the Gandak, but prior to the construction of the Gandak embankment it was fed from that river. Its channel, even in the dry season, can be distinctly traced up to the embankment near Parmanand Pattī; and as a part of the Sāran irrigation scheme, the connection has been restored by inserting a sluice at Siswān and allowing the Gandak waters to enter the old bed. Its stream is, however, very shallow in the hot weather, though it is also fed by numerous small streams. In the rains it rises and falls very rapidly and occasionally overflows its banks at several places, but these inundations are due to the flood water of the Gogrā finding its way up and forcing back the Dāhā as far as Champai, 16 miles from the junction of the rivers. Navigation is carried on as far as Siwān, 31 miles above its confluence with the Gogrā, but is impeded a good deal by some low bridges. The total length of the stream is 60 miles, but its course is very tortuous; in this distance it has a fall of about 0·8 feet per mile. The water is utilized for irrigation nearly the whole way down to Siwān, lifts being met with at about every 200 yards in the upper reaches; but as the stream grows broader, they become fewer in number and cease altogether after Siwān.

Gandakī. The Gandakī is one of the most important drainage channels in the district and also forms part of the Sāran canal system. It formerly had its origin in a *sota* or spill channel of the Gandak, before the embankment was made; and this channel is still visible up to Karariā, on the 96th mile of the embankment. It flows in a south-easterly direction through the

district, taking the name of Māhīnadī at Sītalpur, and finally falls into the Ganges near Sonpur; a branch also goes off west of Sītalpur and finds its way into the Ganges near Chirānd. The principal places it passes are Gopālganj, the headquarters of the subdivision of the same name, Chauki Hasan, Mahārājganj, Baniāpur, Nagwā, Garkhā and Sītalpur. When the Ganges is in flood, its backwaters force their way up to Garkhā, where the Rewā Ghāt road crosses it by a large bridge; and nearly the whole country on its south bank as far as Dīghwārā is laid under water. In the hot weather it runs very low; but there are springs in its bed, which the cultivators utilize, by throwing up embankments, to retain the water. The channel is generally well-defined and straight, and the people say that, before the Gandak embankment was constructed, this channel was navigable up to the Gandak; but now boats of 1,000 maunds burden can get no higher than the Garkhā bridge in the rains. Its total length is 90 miles, in which distance it falls 80 feet, equal to a fall of ·834 feet per mile. The banks are not the same level:—where one is high, the other is low:—and despite embankments in several places, it occasionally overflows. It has several feeders, which are used for irrigating rice; the principal of these is the Dhanai.

The Dhanai, now one of the Sāran canalized rivers, has its source at the 77th mile of the Gandak embankment, some 10 miles south-east of the Gandakī; it was formerly connected, by the Rupanchāp *sota* or spill channel, with the Gandak before the construction of the embankment. Old villagers say that it was then navigable for boats of 300 or 400 maunds throughout its entire course. It is now fed from the same source through the sluice called after Rupanchāp village. It runs in a south-westerly direction, and joins the Gandakī at the village of Parauli, a distance of about 50 miles from its source. In the hot weather it is very shallow, and wells are dug in its bed from 3 to 9 feet below the surface. Dams are also thrown across it in places, and its bed is cultivated for spring crops. The banks are low, riparian embankments are few, and floods do much harm. There are several bridges which impede navigation. The average fall is one foot per mile, and the course is very tortuous. The principal places on this stream are Baraulī, Barhogā and Basantpur. Dhanai.

The Gangrī is also a tributary of the Gandakī, and, like it, is connected with the Sāran canal system. This stream rises near Bandhauli, on the Gandak embankment, not far from the Bānsghāt factory; and was doubtless fed by the Gandak before Gangrī.

that work was constructed. After flowing a short distance to the west, it turns southwards, and passing Rājpatī factory, flows on past Mashrak, where it crosses the Chaprā and Sattar Ghāt road. It finally joins the Gandakī at Sītalpur, after a course of 50 miles.

Khatsā. The Khatsā or Juthar is a tributary of the Gangrī, rising at the foot of the embankment near Rāmkolā factory, and joining the Gandak at Bisambharpur. In some places it is embanked, but not so strongly as could be desired. Its total length is 24 miles. Both this stream and the Gandakī are very similar in character to the Dhanai.

LAKES AND MARSHES. Lakes, properly so-called, do not exist in the Sāran district, but a vast number of broads and marshes called *chaurs* may be found after the cessation of the rains. They contain water till well into the cold, and even until the hot weather, and are the home of innumerable water-fowl. The largest, which is known as the Hardeā *chaur*, extends from Sonpur 20 miles along the Gandak embankment, and has a breadth varying from 2 to 5 miles, and a depth of from 4 to 13 feet. It is formed by the back-waters of the Ganges in flood forcing their way up through the Gandakī or Māhīnadī. Its drainage has been frequently suggested, but never seriously attempted. Another large *chaur* is that near Mīrzāpur, which is 5 to 6 miles long and from 2 to 3 miles broad. Other marshes are to be found near Mānjhi, Ekmā, Ghiāspur, Raghunāthpur, Pīpra, Dharmangtā and Baraulī. Those which dry soonest leave the ground saturated with moisture for the winter crops, while in others, where the water lies longer, a precarious crop of early rice is snatched before they are again covered with a sheet of water. A special feature of such marsh cultivation is the growth of a long-stemmed rice, which keeps pace in its growth with the rising of the flood water; no matter how high the latter rises, the rice keeps above the flood-level.

GEOLOGY. The district is composed of Indo-Gangetic alluvium, *i.e.*, of silt brought down for ages past by the Ganges and its tributaries. The process of land formation has roughly been as follows. During the rainy season, the Ganges and its tributaries increase enormously in volume, carrying down vast quantities of silt or mud, with the result that they overflow into the adjacent country. When the water subsides again, the rivers in their retreat leave some of the silt which they have brought with them spread over the once flooded land as a thin soil deposit. This process has been repeated during thousands of years, and the land has thus been gradually growing and the surface of the land gradually raised. In the older alluvium nodular segregations of carbonate of lime,

known as *kankar*, are found, which are used largely to make lime and as road metalling. The soil is in many places saliferous, and the extraction of saltpetre has long been an important industry.

BOTANY.

Nearly the whole of the district is under cultivation, and supports a dense population; so close in consequence is the tilth that in large areas field is conterminous with field, and the cultivated land abuts so closely on wayside and water-course as to leave no foothold for those species that form roadside hedges and fill the weedy waste places characteristic of Lower Bengal. The level expanse of tilth is, however, diversified with bamboos, palms and mango orchards, or less frequently groves of other trees; in and about the villages themselves these groves are often accompanied by a number of tree weeds and semi-spontaneous, more or less useful bushes and trees. The tracts liable to inundation are mainly confined to the banks of the larger rivers, and are there often covered with a jungle of reeds and bushes, largely tamarisk, with a few trees. To the south, however, the river courses widen considerably in proportion to their streams, and their beds contain little or no vegetation. In the rains the powerful current sweeps everything away, and at other seasons the shingly or sandy banks are too dry to admit of much growth. But old river beds, marshes, lakes, and such streams as are stagnant or nearly so, except after heavy rain, are almost as completely covered with vegetation as is the land, while even small rivers with a gentle stream abound with water-plants.*

Though the district contains no forests, it is well timbered, the most conspicuous trees being the mango (Mangifera indica), *sisū* (Dalbergia Sissoo), red cotton tree (Bombax malabaricum), and tamarind. The village sites are often embedded in groves of the palmyra (Borassus flabellifer) and date-palm (Phœnix sylvestris), while the numerous mango orchards are a marked feature of the landscape. The surface is highly cultivated, but the banks of streams and patches of waste land are covered by a dry scrub jungle of shrubs of the order of Euphorbiaceæ, Butea and other leguminous trees, and species of Ficus, Schleichera, Wendlandia and Gmelina.

The principal trees yielding timber are *sisū*, jack or *kathar* (Artocarpus integrifolia), *babūl* (Acacia arabica), *mahuā* (Bassia latifolia), *baherā* (Terminalia belerica), *siris* (Albizzia Lebbek), *jāman* (Eugenia Jambolana), the mango, banyan and red cotton tree. Among trees and plants yielding dyes are *kusum* (Schleichera trijuga), *palās* (Butea frondosa), the indigo plant, and the *pīpal* (Ficus religiosa). The *narkat* reed is common in marshes

* D. Prain, *Bengal Plants*, Calcutta, 1903.

to the west of the district and is made into a coarse matting; the *sirkā* reed, which grows in drier localities, is used for thatching and for covering carts. An account of the fruits and vegetables of the district will be found in Chapter V.

FAUNA. Sāran, the most densely populated and closely cultivated district in the Patna Division, offers few attractions to the sportsman. Every available acre has been brought under the plough; and the consequence is that there are few wild animals to be found. Formerly both leopards and tigers were common, but they have now completely disappeared; and though several leopards have been killed in the district, they were wanderers from the jungle tracts to the north. The Indian wolf also used to be common, but is now confined to the western and northern portions of the district. Isolated specimens of the hyæna and wild dog have been found. Jackals abound and are said to carry off a number of infants every year. It is however impossible to give statistics, as the returns showing the deaths caused by wild animals do not distinguish between children carried off by jackals and persons dying from their bite.

There are three representatives of the Ungulata, viz., *nīlgai* (Boselaphus tragocamelus), black buck (Antilope cervicapra) and wild pig (Sus cristatus). *Nīlgai* are found in herds of as many as 30 or 40 all along the big rivers and for some miles inland. They are very numerous, and as they are not killed off by the natives, are most destructive to crops, especially poppy. Small herds of black buck are to be found in the *doāb* between the Ganges and Gogrā south of Chaprā; they are not numerous and have poor heads. Wild pig are common and are reported to be increasing in numbers. They abound in the low scrub jungle found on the alluvial islands called *diāras*, and do a great deal of damage to sweet potatoes and sugarcane. They come in large numbers to the cane fields in the cold weather, and go back to the *diāras* when the cane is cut.

Game birds. The chief game birds are quail, snipe and duck. Common quail are very plentiful. They first visit the district during September and October, but few are seen till February and March, when they are found in large numbers in suitable cover; towards the middle and end of April they disappear. The blue-breasted quail is rare, but the black-breasted quail is fairly common, and also button quail during the cold weather. Black partridge are fairly common in the jungle fringing the river banks, while grey partridge are found in the west and south-west of the district. The lesser florican is a permanent resident of the district, but is rare. There are four varieties of snipe. The common snipe

and jack snipe are common in the cold weather. The pintail snipe is rare, but the painted snipe is common for the greater part of the year. It disappears in the hot weather, and returns to breed in the rains. The grey lag goose is not very common, but the bar-headed goose abounds on the large rivers during the cold weather. Nineteen kinds of duck have been found in the district. The pink-headed duck, large whistling teal, mallard, crested teal, baikal or clucking teal, and the eastern white-eyed duck are rare. Other varieties are plentiful, such as ruddy sheldrake or Brāhmanī duck, whistling teal, cotton teal, spotted billed duck, gadwall, common teal, widgeon, pintail, blue-winged teal, the shoveller, the red-crested pochard, the white-eyed duck and the tufted duck; large numbers are shot in the cold weather on suitable *jhīls*. Specimens of the smew (Mergus albellus) and the goosander (Merganser castor) have also been shot in the district.

Fish. The Ganges and its tributaries, the Gogrā and Gandak, contain a large number of edible fish, the most valuable of which belong to the carp family, such as *rahu* (Labeo rohita) and *katlā* (Catla buchanani). *Hilsā* are also caught in the Ganges during the rainy season as they ascend from the sea, the hauls, though not so great as lower down the river, being by no means insignificant; but with this exception, there is not much fishing during the monsoon. The fishing season practically begins in October with the subsidence of the floods, and the busy season is from November to March, the largest hauls being made in December, January and February. Among other common varieties may be mentioned *piyās*, *bachwā*, *buāri* and *anwāri*. The *buāri* is said to be one of the largest of the fish, attaining frequently a weight of 80 lbs. The *anwāri* is a small mullet with flesh of a delicate flavour, which moves on the top of the water. Crustaceous fish are common, and prawns are caught in large numbers. Porpoises abound in the Ganges, and tortoises are also numerous. The fish-eating alligator (Gavialis Gangeticus), called *ghariāl*, is plentiful in the three principal rivers, and is also found in smaller streams in the rains. The mugger or snub-nosed crocodile is not nearly so common, being found only in the larger rivers.

The most important fisheries are those in the Ganges, Gogrā and Gandak, those in the former two rivers being leased out annually by Government; but there are also valuable fisheries in the deeper swamps dotted over the district and in some of the larger tanks. In one such tank in Chaprā, where they can be caught with rod and line, it is reported that fish scaling nearly 80 lbs. sometimes reward the fisherman's skill.

Reptiles. Snakes are numerous, the most common being the deadly *karait* (Bungarus coeruleus), the *gahuman* or cobra (Naia tripudians), and the common water snake called *dhāmin*.

CLIMATE. The seasons in Sāran are very similar to those of Muzaffarpur, being, perhaps, a little hotter. The hot weather begins about the middle of March, when hot westerly winds, accompanied by dust-storms, begin to blow during the day. At night, the wind comes generally from the east; and the temperature is comparatively cool, being lowered by occasional thunderstorms; but the nights are extremely hot from the end of May until the first break of the monsoon. In a normal year the rains set in about the third week of June, and continue, with intermissions, till about the end of September or the early part of October. Here, as elsewhere, the month of September is generally the most trying season of the year, for the air is damp and steamy, while the sun's rays are extremely strong. The cold weather begins after the middle of October, and continues till the beginning of March, up to which time the days are still comparatively cool. This season is bracing and agreeable, at least from November till February; for the day temperature is low, the air is dry, and the nights are distinctly cold.

Temperature and humidity. The climate is, on the whole, hot and dry, and though the winter months are delightfully cool, the heat is excessive in May and June. The mean temperature varies from 62° in January to 89° in May, the mean maximum from 75° in January to 100° in April and May, while the mean minimum ranges from 50° in January to 79° in June to August. Humidity ranges from 57 per cent. of saturation in April to 88 per cent. in August.

Rainfall. Sāran is one of the driest districts in Bengal, the average annual rainfall being only 45·05 inches. Not only is the rainfall small in amount, but it is frequently capricious, varying in the decade ending in 1901 from 24·03 inches in 1896-97 (the lowest on record) to 64·76 inches in 1899-1900; another year of excessive rainfall was 1871, when the fall was over 80 inches or nearly double the normal. In ordinary years the monsoon breaks in June, which has an average rainfall of 7·95 inches, and the maximum monthly fall of 11·77 inches is reached in July. The average fall then declines to 10·99 inches in August, to 8·19 inches in September and to 2·67 inches in October. From November to April fine dry weather prevails, and only a fraction of an inch falls monthly. Statistics of the rainfall at the different recording stations are given below for the cold weather (November to February), the hot weather (March to May), and

the rainy season (June to October), the figures shewn being the averages recorded in each case.

STATION.	Years recorded.	November to February.	March to May.	June to October.	Annual average.
CHAPRA	45—48	1·57	2·05	37·53	41·15
SIWAN	30—31	1·68	2·15	42·27	46·10
GOPALGANJ ...	21—23	1·43	2·89	41·64	45·96
AMNAUR	7—8	1·31	1·70	45·01	48·02
BASANTPUR ...	7—8	1·47	2·24	41·38	45·09
EKMA	7—8	1·29	1·04	41·66	43·99
AVERAGE ...	......	1·46	2·01	41·58	45·05

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY

EARLY HISTORY. Legendary accounts.

SARAN, lying on one of the main lines of the Aryan advance, was probably occupied at an early period by Aryan races. According to a tradition preserved in Vedic literature, the Videhas marched eastwards from the Saraswatī until they reached the banks of the Gandak, and were informed by Agni, the god of fire, that their home lay to the east of its broad stream. In obedience to his directions, the Videhas crossed the river and founded a powerful kingdom on its eastern bank; but it seems likely that some of them settled in Sāran, which lay on the line of march, while the main body crossed the Gandak. Local legend and tradition, at least, point to the fact that Sāran was originally inhabited by aboriginal races, who were subdued or driven out by Aryan immigrants. The Cheros are said to have held the country for many centuries, and traces of their rule are still pointed out in the great mounds and fortifications found in different places. These aboriginal inhabitants are believed to have been subdued by immigrant Rājputs after a conflict which lasted for hundreds of years; and the family records of the Harihobans Rājputs of Haldī in the adjoining district of Ballia state that their forefathers settled at Mānjhi on the banks of the Gogrā in this district, and after a protracted struggle conquered the Cheros, who had been lords of the country.*

At the dawn of history Sāran appears to have formed the eastern limit of the kingdom of Kosala, which probably had the Ganges for its southern boundary and the mountains of Nepāl for its northern boundary, while on the east it was separated from the territory of Mithilā by the Gandak river.† This kingdom played a prominent part in the history of the Gangetic valley at the time when Buddha was beginning his long ministry, but of Sāran itself at this period we know nothing. It has, indeed, been conjectured that the village of Chirānd marks the site of the ancient city of Vaisāli, which Buddha visited more than once, and that Siwān is identical with Kusinārā, the scene of his death;

* Winton Oldham, *Memoir of the Ghāzīpur District* (1870), Part I, p. 55.
† T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India* (1903), p. 25.

but these views have not been generally accepted and must be regarded as speculative.*

Hiuen Tsiang's account. There seem to be better grounds for believing that in the seventh century A. D. Sāran may have formed part of the kingdom of Chenchu (Ghāzīpur), of which Hiuen Tsiang has left the following description :—" The people are wealthy and prosperous ; the towns and villages are close together. The soil is rich and fertile, and the land is regularly cultivated. The climate is soft and temperate, and the manners of the people are pure and honest. The disposition of the men is naturally fierce and excitable ; they are believers both in heretical and true doctrine. "† Hiuen Tsiang then proceeds to describe the places he visited in this kingdom, and among these there are three which it has been suggested were situated in Sāran. After mentioning Mo-ho-so-lo, which has been identified with Masār in the district of Shāhābād, he goes on to say that on the north of the Ganges there was a temple of Narayan Deva, with balconies and towers wonderfully sculptured and ornamented, which contained images wrought of stone with the highest art of man. To the east of this temple was a stūpa built by Asoka on the spot where Buddha had converted some desert demons who fed on human flesh and blood ; and to the south-east of this was a ruined stūpa built by a Brāhman over the pitcher (*kumbha*) with which he measured the ashes of Buddha into eight equal portions, each equivalent to a *drona*, and divided them among the eight kings of the country.

General Cunningham was of opinion that Hiuen Tsiang must have crossed the Ganges above Revelganj, a specially holy spot near the confluence of the Ganges and the Gogrā, and would identify the latter place with the site of the temple of Narayan or Vishnu. As regards the stūpa built by Asoka to commemorate the conversion of the demons of the desert, he considered that the monument must have been called the Sarana stūpa or Asylum stūpa, because the demons embraced Buddhism, or as it was expressed by the ancient Buddhists, sought refuge or asylum of the Three Precious Ones, *i.e.*, of the Buddhist Triad, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The Drona stūpa, he says, was also called the Kumbha stūpa as it was erected over the *kumbha* or measuring vessel, and the village of Dighwārā, 17 miles south-east of Chaprā, has the same signification and occupies the same position as this famous stūpa.‡ Mr. Carlleyle followed General Cunningham

* W. Hoey, *Identification of Kusinārā, Vaisāli and other places*, J. A. S. B., Vol. LXIX, 1900.

† S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (1884), Vol. I, p. 62.

‡ A. Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India* (1871), pp. 440-442.

in placing the temple of Narayan in this district, but conjectured that it was at a village called Narayanpur, which has been washed away by the Ganges. The Asylum stūpa, he added, might possibly have been on an island in the Gogrā, which has also been washed away; but he suggested that it might very likely have been at Godnā, close to Revelganj, and that the site of the Kumbha stūpa should be looked for among the mounds of ancient ruins at Chirānd.* These attempts to identify the sites mentioned by Hiuen Tsiang must be regarded as at least speculative; and it should be mentioned that General Cunningham subsequently abandoned the theory that the Asylum stūpa was erected in this district and located its site at Arrah, the headquarters of the district of Shāhābād.†

Dighwā Dubauli plate. The earliest authentic monument found in Sāran is an inscribed copper plate discovered at the village of Dighwā Dubauli, about 34 miles north-east of Chaprā. This copper plate records the grant of a village called Paniyaka in the Srāvasti country by Mahārājā Mahendrapāla in order to increase the religious merits of his parents. The date of this grant or charter has been fixed by Dr. Fleet at 761-62 A.D., and Mahendrapāla, in his opinion, was one of a line of Mahārājās, whose capital was at Srāvasti or Benāres, and whose kingdom extended from Benāres on the south to Srāvasti on the north and from Allahābād on the west to the Sāran district on the east.‡

MUHAMMADAN RULE. In the beginning of the 13th century the tide of Muhammadan conquest swept over Bihār; and between 1211 and 1226 the Governor of Bengal, Ghiās-ud-dīn Iwaz, carried his arms into the territory of the Rājā of Tirhut, which had never before been

Bengal Sultāns. subdued by the Muhammadan arms, and compelled him to pay tribute. There is however no light on the history of this district till the close of that century, when Nāsir-ud-dīn Bughrā Khān, the son of the Emperor Ghiās-ud-dīn Balban, was king of Bengal,—a weak ruler, into whose territories the Emperor of Delhi was in the habit of sending ship-loads of any dacoits he caught and there letting them loose. On the death of the Emperor Balban, Nāsir-ud-dīn's son, Muiz-ud-dīn Kaikobād, was raised to the throne; and in 1288 Nāsir-ud-dīn marched against him to enforce his own claims and advanced as far as the banks of the Gogrā in *Sarkār* Sāran. Here he was met by his son at the head of the imperial forces, and some lengthy negotiations

* Reports, Arch. Surv. Ind., Vol. XXII, pages 76-82.

† Reports, Arch. Surv. Ind., Vol. III, pages 72-79.

‡ F. Fleet, *Sanskrit and Old Kanarese Inscriptions :—Dighwā Dubauli Plate of the Mahārājā Mahendrapāla*, Indian Antiquary, Vol. XV, 1886.

ensued. Of these there is a picturesque account in the Muhammadan historians, from whom we learn that it was the hottest time of the year, so that "from excesssive heat the soldiers foamed at the mouth."* The upshot, however, was that father and son were reconciled, the former waiving his claims to the empire of Delhi and being permitted to retain Bengal as an independent kingdom. The weak Nāsir-ud-dīn thereupon returned to his own camp, weeping and crying, fasted all day, and then marched back to his kingdom.†

In the middle of the 14th century Sāran must have acknowledged the suzerainty of Ilyās Shāh, the first independent Sultān of Bengal (1345-58), who invaded and ravaged Tirhut, harried the frontier of the Delhi empire, and built a fortress at Hājīpur to consolidate his conquests. The Gogrā now formed the boundary between the territory of the kings of Bengal and the emperors of Delhi, but this outlying portion of the dominions of the former appears to have been wrested from them in 1397 by the kings of Jaunpur, who ruled over it for another century. It was then apparently won back by Husain Shāh, king of Bengal (1498-1518), who, from inscriptions found at Chirānd in this district and at other places, would appear to have established his power over the whole of North Bihār.‡ It was, however, ceded by him in 1499 to the Emperor Sikandar Lodī, who advanced upon Bihār after subduing Jaunpur, and concluded a treaty at Bārh, the terms of which were that the Emperor should hold Bihār, Tirhut and *Sarkār* Sāran, and all the other countries he had subdued, provided he did not invade Bengal.§

It is noticeable that up to this time the Muhammadans cannot have exercised any effective control over this part of their territory, for we find Ferishta mentioning that when Sikandar Lodī reduced Sāran district, it was in the hands of Hindu zamīndārs.‖ In order to break down their power, the Emperor gave the land in *jāgīr* to several of his officers; and according to the account left in the Wākiat-i-Mushtāki, Miān Husain Farmuli was the *jāgīrdār* of Sāran and Champāran, which were called *jalkhet* or the field of water. This chief was a notable champion

* Riyāzu-s-Salātin, translated by Maulvi Abdus Salām (Calcutta, 1904), pp. 88-89.

† C. Stewart, *History of Bengal* (1847), pp. 48-50; Riyāzu-s-Salātin, translated by Maulvi Abdus Salām (Calcutta, 1904), pp. 88-90.

‡ H. Blochmann, *Geography and History of Bengal*, J. A. S. B., Vol. XLII, 1873; and Reports, Arch. Surv. Ind., Vol. XXII, p. 74.

§ C. Stewart, *History of Bengal* (1847), p. 73.

‖ J. Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India* (1829).

of Islām, for we are assured that he had taken no less than 20,000 villages from the infidels besides those comprising his *jāgīr*.*

Campaign of Bābar.

The treaty between Husain Shāh and Sikandar Lodī was not long observed, for Nasrat Shāh, the eldest and most capable of the sons of Husain Shāh, invaded Tirhut, extended his authority over this district, and even across the Gogrā into the Ballia district, where an inscription shows that a mosque near Sikandrapur was built during his reign. He soon came into conflict, however, with the Emperor Bābar, who himself marched into Bihār at the head of a large army to reduce the rebellious Afghān chiefs (1529). When halting at Arrah, the Emperor learnt that the army of Kharīd was encamped near the junction of the Ganges and the Saru, *i.e.*, the Gogrā, on the further side of the latter river, where they had collected 100 or 150 vessels:—Kharīd, Sir H. Elliot explains, included the country on both sides of the Gogrā near Sikandrapur and thence on its left bank down to the Ganges. Bābar regarded this as a hostile demonstration on the part of the king of Bengal, with whom he was at peace, and insisted on the withdrawal of his army and fleet. The warning was disregarded, and Bābar made a simultaneous attack on the enemy with six different detachments, crossing the Ganges on the south from Shāhābād and the Gogrā on the north from Sāran. The Afghāns were completely defeated and dislodged from their position; and the attack made by the Bengal fleet and army was repulsed.

Bābar gives a graphic account of the battle both by land and water, and particularly of the fight on the Gogrā. He seems to have fully appreciated the use of artillery; he tells us his own batteries included cannon, Firinghī pieces and swivels; and he carefully watched the Bengal artillerymen and their methods. "The Bengalis," he solemnly assures us, "are famous for their skill in artillery, and on this occasion we had a good opportunity of observing them; but they do not direct their fire against particular points, but discharge at random." The day after the battle Bābar halted at a village called "Gundneh in the *pargana* of Narhan to the north of the Saru" or Gogrā, *i.e.*, presumably the present village of Guthnī near the river's bank. Here he received Shāh Muhammad Māruf, on whom he had bestowed the country of Sāran, as he had conducted himself to Bābar's satisfaction on several occasions, having twice engaged his father, defeated and taken him. After staying for some time here Bābar marched to a village called Choupareh, which seems clearly to be the modern Chaprā. Here he gives an amusing account

* H. Elliot, *History of India*, Vol. IV, 1873.

of a storm which took place on the 26th May. "The clouds of the rainy season broke, and there was suddenly such a tempest, and the wind rose so high, that most of the tents were blown down. I was writing in the middle of my pavilion, and so suddenly did the storm come on, that I had not time to gather up my papers and the loose sheets that were written, before it blew down the pavilion, with the screen that surrounded it, on my head. The top of the pavilion was blown to pieces, but God preserved me. I suffered no injury. The books and sheets of paper were drenched and wet, but were gathered again with much trouble, folded in woollen cloth, and placed under a bed, over which carpets were thrown. The storm abated in two *gharis*. We contrived to get up the *toshak-khāna* tent, lighted a candle with much difficulty, kindled a fire, and did not sleep till morning, being busily employed all the while in drying the leaves and papers." After this, Bābar left Sāran, and marched along the banks of the Gogrā towards Oudh, having first confirmed the grant of Sāran to Shāh Muhammad Māruf.*

Akbar's conquest.

About half a century after this Sāran was finally amalgamated with the Mughal empire, after Akbar had defeated the Afghāns under the Bengal king, Dāūd Khān, and captured Patna in 1574. In this district an Afghān chief, Kābul Muhammad of Barhariā, is said to have been one of Dāūd Khān's partisans; but he was slain and his citadel taken by Jubrāj Sāhi, one of the early rulers of the Hathwā Rāj, who wrested *pargana* Sipāh from him and then retained it as a grant from Akbar. Sāran now became a part of Bihār under the direct control of a Governor; in the Ain-i-Akbarī it was treated as one of the six *Sarkārs* forming the *Sūbah* or Province of Bihār; and in 1582 it was assessed to revenue by Akbar's Finance Minister, Todar Mal.

European settlements.

Sāran does not again come into prominence until the closing days of Muhammadan rule, when the European merchant adventurers made settlements in the district. Tavernier in his description of Patna, which he visited with Bernier in 1666, says— "The Holland Company have a house there, by reason of their trade in saltpetre, which they refine at a great town called Choupar (Chaprā). Coming to Patna, we met the Hollanders in the street returning from Choupar, who stopped our coaches to salute us. We did not part till we had emptied two bottles of Shiras wine in the open street, which is not taken notice of in that country, where people meet with an entire freedom without any ceremony." In another part of his Travels he gives a fuller

* W. Erskine, *Memoirs of Bābar*, 1826.

account of this Dutch settlement. "The Dutch," he states, "have established a depôt at Chaprā; and the saltpetre being refined there, they send it by river to Hooghly. They imported boilers from Holland, and employed refiners to refine the saltpetre for themselves; but have not succeeded, because the people of the country, seeing that the Dutch wished to deprive them of the profits of refining, would not supply them any longer with whey, without the aid of which the saltpetre cannot be bleached, for it is worth nothing at all, if it is not very white and very transparent."

The English also were attracted to Chaprā about this time by the trade in saltpetre, which was in great demand for the manufacture of gunpowder; but this trade must have been subject to interruption, for in 1711 the Council at Fort William learnt from the Agent at the Patna factory that a formidable rebel had plundered Chaprā, and when the Nawāb sent a force of 2,000 men against the marauders, "they fled, setting fire to all before them, amongst the rest our peter godowns, by which t'is feared we shall lose about 500 maunds."*

Last days of Muhammadan rule.

Subsequently, in 1726, Fakhr-ud-daula, the Nawāb or Governor of Bihār, sent another force into Sāran against Sheikh Abdulla, who according to the Sair-ul-Mutākharin, "was a man of consequence, who seemed to be the main hinge of all the Government business in the province, for he had been for a length of time always employed by every Governor, either as his deputy, or as a general farmer of the revenue. He had connections with almost all the zamīndārs, was greatly respected by every one of them, and had acquired the good-will of the troops, as well as of every individual in the province, where he was universally respected. Fakhr-ud-daula, incited by a sense of jealousy, set up several chicanes against him, and he made him so uneasy, that the other thought it expedient to quit his house at Azīmābād (Patna) and repair to the other side of the Ganges, where he had built a mud fort about the town of Siwān. The Governor, not satisfied with this retreat, crossed the river after him, and besieged him in the said castle. The man, reduced to extremities, applied to Saādat Khān, Governor of Oudh, his next neighbour, to whom he exposed his situation with the subject of the difference; and on his being sent for by him, he sallied out of the fort, forced bravely his passage through Fakhr-ud-daula's camp, and effected his retreat by a valorous action, in which he eluded Fakhr-ud-daula's inimical designs, and proved himself a soldier as well as a financier.†"

* C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal* (1901), Vol. ii, p. 14.

† Raymond's translation of the Sair-ul-Mutākharin, reprinted at Calcutta, 1902.

The British do not appear to have made any demonstration in force until 1757, when a small army under Eyre Coote came into Sāran in pursuit of Monsieur Law, who had espoused the cause of Sirāj-ud-daula. This detachment crossed over from the south of the Ganges, the passage taking them 3 days, owing to difficulties in obtaining ferry boats; and reached Chaprā on the 4th August only to learn that Law had already reached Benāres. Eyre Coote then held a council of war, at which it was resolved that they should return to Patna, because they had no boats by which to convey the troops by river, while the roads were impassable, the country being under water, and also because they were afraid that the Nawāb of Oudh, Shujā-ud-daula, whose territory lay on the other side of the Gogrā, would regard an advance as a *casus belli.* Other strong reasons against a further advance were that sickness had broken out among the men, which the Surgeon attributed to the soil being impregnated with saltpetre, and last, but not least, that the arrack brought for the use of the soldiers was finished and they could get no fresh supply. The force accordingly returned to Patna, and thus ended an expedition, which, according to Broome, "must always be regarded as an extraordinary instance of military hardihood and perseverance: a mere handful of troops pursuing an enemy, little inferior in numbers and equipment, for nearly 400 miles, through a country almost unknown, and either secretly or openly hostile, with continued obstacles and difficulties occurring at every step, and this too at the most unhealthy and trying season of the year.*"

Eyre Coote's expedition.

The next time that a British force appeared in the district, it met with a disastrous defeat. This was in 1763, after Ellis, the Agent at Patna, thinking that war with Mīr Kāsim Alī was inevitable, had made an ill-advised attempt to seize the city. Some troops of the Nawāb having come up, the English were driven back into the factory, and then, as their provisions began to run short and their position was untenable, they resolved to try and find shelter in the territory of the Nawāb of Oudh. They accordingly crossed the Ganges during the night of the 29th June, and commenced their march towards Chaprā. The rains, however, had now set in with great violence, the whole country was under water, and the detachment was destitute of provisions and ill-supplied with ammunition. To add to their distress, they were harassed by the enemy, who speedily followed in pursuit; the inhabitants rose against them; and a strong force under the command of Somru crossed from Buxar to intercept their retreat. Notwithstanding these difficulties, they

Battle of Mānjhi.

* A. Broome, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army*, 1850.

fought their way as far as Mānjhi, where they were surrounded by the enemy under Somru and Rām Nidi, Faujdār of Sāran, whom the author of the Sair-ul-Mutākharin describes as an ungrateful Bengali. Here, on the 1st July, Captain Carstairs drew out his shattered force to meet the attack; and though handicapped by want of guns and ammunition, offered a brief but ineffectual resistance. One battalion charged with fixed bayonets and compelled the enemy to give ground; but the Europeans, worn out with fatigue and want of nourishment, refused to follow them; and eventually the whole force laid down their arms and surrendered. Many of the sepoys took service with Mīr Kāsim Alī, and the remainder were released after being stripped of their equipment; some of the foreigners among the Europeans also entered the enemy's ranks; but with the exception of a few who managed to escape, all the English officers, soldiers and servants of the Company were carried off to Patna, where they were afterwards cruelly massacred.*

BRITISH CONQUEST. The conquest of Sāran by the British took place in 1764, after Shujā-ud-daula had been driven back from Patna by Major Carnac. It was then determined to follow up this blow by marching a detachment through Sāran into Ghāzīpur, and a force was accordingly sent across the Ganges under the command of Major Champion. On the 2nd of June this force crossed the Ganges and marched through Sāran, which, according to Broome, they reduced to complete subjection, until they reached the banks of the Gogrā. Here they were joined by another battalion, which had been sent from Patna to reinforce them; but the rainy season having set in, they were compelled to encamp, one battalion halting at Mānjhi, while two more battalions were cantoned at Chaprā, where they erected temporary barracks.

Mutiny of the troops. In September a serious mutiny broke out among the troops, the first rising taking place at Mānjhi, where Captain Galliez's battalion, the oldest corps in the service, was stationed. Instigated by some of the native officers, they assembled on parade, and declared their intention of serving no longer, alleging that some promises made to them had been broken. They then imprisoned Captain Ahmuty and the other European officers and sergeants; but on the following day released them all, and let them proceed unmolested to Chaprā. These insubordinate proceedings appear rather to have resembled the ebullition of temper displayed by spoiled children than any concerted plan of mutiny. No intention to desert or join the enemy was manifested, and the sepoys

† Raymond's tran[illegible]*assacre* by H. Beveridge, Calcutta Review, Vol. LXXIX, 1884; 1902. [illegible]*f the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army*, 1850.

remained quietly encamped at Mānjhi, without any apparent definite object.

On the arrival of the officers at Chaprā, an express was immediately sent off to Major Hector Munro; and Captain Wemyss, who was in command, marched at once to Mānjhi with the Marines and the 6th Battalion. After two days' fatiguing march, the whole country being under water, this detachment reached Mānjhi at daybreak. Here they found the mutineers bivouacked in a mango tope, which, owing to the heavy rain that had fallen, was completely surrounded by water. Captain Wemyss drew up his detachment facing them, and the mutineers being taken by surprise, and probably without any recognized leader, agreed to surrender. Rafts were immediately constructed, and the whole battalion were made prisoners, deprived of their arms, and marched to Chaprā.

Here they were met by Hector Munro, who had hurried up from Bankipore with the grenadiers of the European Battalion. Having paraded the troops, he ordered Captain Ahmuty to pick out fifty of the ring-leaders; and from these he selected 24 men, whom he ordered to be tried at once by a drum-head Court Martial, composed of native officers. This Court Martial found the 24 sepoys guilty and sentenced them to be blown away from the guns. Munro accepted their verdict and ordered four of the prisoners to be tied to the guns, whereupon four grenadiers immediately stepped forward and claimed the right of precedence, as they had always occupied the post of honour in the field. Their request was complied with, the battalion men were untied, and the four grenadiers tied up and blown away. This was followed by sixteen more of the mutineers being blown away from the guns, all of them marching boldly up and awaiting the fatal signal unmoved; the remaining four were subsequently executed in a similar manner at Maner in the presence of two battalions which had recently evinced a mutinous spirit. Captain Williams, who was present with the Marines, says that there was not a dry eye among them, though they had long been accustomed to hard service, and two of them had actually taken part in the shooting of Admiral Byng. The account of the firm stoicism of the condemned sepoys is also confirmed by the author of the Sair-ul-Mutākharin, who says that a Brāhman, who was one of the men sentenced to death, asked for some moments' delay to perform his devotions. Having obtained his request, he prayed to the sun, took a little clay from the ground, rubbed his forehead and face with it, and then marched up to the gun and submitted quietly to his fate. This well-timed display of resolution and severity

effectually and completely suppressed the spirit of insubordination that had been so long existing in the native army.*

Visit of Clive.

After this, the British remained in occupation of the district, and in October 1764 the battle of Buxar secured to them the possession of the Lower Provinces of Bengal. In 1766 Lord Clive himself came to Chaprā, accompanied by General Carnac, after suppressing what is known as the White Mutiny. Here he was met by Shujā-ud-daula, Nawāb Vizier of Oudh, by Munīr-ud-daula, the minister of the Emperor Shāh Alam, and by Rājā Balwant Singh of Benāres; and a conference was held at which a treaty was entered into by the contracting parties for their mutual defence against the Marāthās. According to the Sair-ul-Mutākharin, after signing the conventions, "these noble personages exchanged entertainments and curious and costly presents, and the Vizier having been entertained with a mock battle among the European soldiers, who managed their guns and muskets with an amazing quickness and celerity, made them a present of Rs. 1,000 and returned to his capital."

Early British administration.

The early days of British administration were troubled ones, owing to the rebellion of Mahārājā Fateh Sāhi of Husepur. Fateh Sāhi was descended from a line of semi-independent chiefs who had long exercised great power in Sāran; and his immediate predecessor, Sardār Sāhi, had demolished the fort of Majhauli and compelled its Rājā to agree not to go about with flags and drums, the ensigns of Rājāship, until he had retaken them by force from the Rājās of Husepur. A kinsman of the powerful Balwant Singh, he chafed again the British rule, refused to pay revenue, resisted the troops sent against him, and was with much difficulty expelled from Husepur. Husepur, which appears to have been conterminous with the present subdivisions of Siwān and Gopālganj, was then farmed out to one Gobind Rām; but Fateh Sāhi, who had retired into a large tract of forest, called Bāgh Joginī, lying between Gorakhpur and Sāran and adjoining the territory under the Vizier of Oudh, took every opportunity to make raids into the district, to plunder the villages, and to stop the collections of revenue. The unsettled state of the country, his easy access to the territories of an independent prince, where British troops were unable to pursue him, and the impenetrable forest which surrounded his retreat, the collusion of the agents of the Vizier of Oudh, and above all, the attachment of the people to their expelled Rājā and their dislike of a Government farmer, all contributed to favour his designs; and he kept the country in a state of terror and the British authorities constantly on the

* A. Broome, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army*, 1850.

alert. In 1772, Gobind Rām, the Government farmer, was put to death in one of these raids, and the revenue collections having come to a standstill, the Collector of *Sarkār* Sāran recommended that Fateh Sāhi should be induced to come in on the promise of an allowance being made him by Government. This proposal was accepted; Gobind Rām's murder was forgiven on Fateh Sāhi's solemnly denying any knowledge of the transaction; and Fateh Sāhi came to Patna, and promised to remain quietly with his family at Husepur. His turbulent disposition did not allow him to remain long quiet, however, and within two months he broke his promise and once more became a border free-booter.

At this time Husepur was under the charge of one Mīr Jamāl, who was styled Superintendent of Government Revenue; and after being under the direct management of Government for a year, it was let out in farm to Basant Sāhi, a cousin of Fateh Sāhi, on the security of Rājā Chait Singh of Benāres. In 1775 both Basant Sāhi and Mīr Jamāl were killed in a night attack by Fateh Sāhi at Jādopur, a short distance from Husepur; and Fateh Sāhi eluded the pursuit of two companies of sepoys under Lieutenent Erskine, which were in the neighbourhood, and escaped with his booty to his forest fastness. Basant Sāhi's head, it is said, was cut off and sent to his widow, who ascended a funeral pyre with it in her lap and became a *satī*. In dying, she pronounced a terrible curse on any of her descendants who should partake of any food with Fateh Sāhi or any of his race; to this day, it is said, the Mahārājās of Hathwā have religiously refrained from touching food or drinking even a drop of water, while travelling through that part of the Gorakhpur district which is the property of the Rājās of Tamkūhī, the descendants of Fateh Sāhi.*

The Provincial Council at Patna were now in despair of capturing the rebel chief. He had under him a trained body of horsemen and matchlockmen; the numbers of his followers had been swollen by crowds of *fakīrs* and banditti; and Lieutenant Erskine reported that there were so many entrances to his jungle retreat that it would take at least a battalion of sepoys to block them up and pursue him with any prospect of success. The Council, accordingly, wrote to Warren Hastings, urging that as Fāteh Sāhi had taken shelter in the dominions of the Nawāb of Oudh, the latter should be asked to assist the British troops. This was done, and a body of sepoys under Lieutenant Hardinge was sent in pursuit of Fateh Sāhi. The expedition came to nothing, as Saiyid Muhammad, the Faujdār of Gorakhpur,

* *Chronicles of the Hāthwā Rāj*, Calcutta Review, Vol. CV., 1897.

was in collusion with Fateh Sāhi, and refused to deliver an attack, though he was induced to march within 150 yards of the rebel's entrenchments. The troops were then marched back to their headquarters at Baragāon, or Line Bazar as it was also called from being a cantonment of the company's troops; and a reward of Rs. 10,000 was offered to any one who would arrest him. All efforts to seize him ended, however, in equal failure, though troops scoured the country-side from time to time. The outlaw remained at large, laying the whole borderland under contribution, and such was the terror he inspired that the local authorities were afraid to grant his lands to Mahesh Datt Sāhi, his nephew and the son of Basant Sāhi, lest he should suffer the fate of his father and the revenue administration become still more disorganized. After the death of Mahesh Datt Sāhi, the estate was restored, in 1791, to his infant son, Chhattardhāri Singh; and in 1808 Fateh Sāhi, whose powers for mischief were gradually curtailed as a more settled administration was introduced, closed his turbulent career by becoming a *fakīr*.*

THE MUTINY OF 1857. The only other notable event in the history of Sāran was the Mutiny of 1857. All was quiet till the end of July, largely owing to the bold policy pursued by Major Holmes, the Commandant of the 12th Irregular Cavalry at Sugauli, who firmly repressed disaffection, and, on his own authority, declared martial law. This order was cancelled as soon as Government learnt of it, but in the meantime it had been effectual in preventing any outbreak. On the 25th July the regiment mutinied, savagely murdered Major Holmes and their officers, and then marched off to Azamgarh, attacking on the way the houses of Messrs. Lynch and McDonell, the Deputy Magistrate and Sub-Deputy Opium Agent at Siwān, who narrowly escaped with their lives. On hearing of this outbreak, the European residents, being unable to defend the station, left Chaprā on the 28th July, and took refuge at Dinapore; but they returned on the 12th August to find everything in a tranquil and orderly state, with the jail and treasury untouched, and the detachment of *Najībs* still loyal, order having been preserved during their absence by a Muhammadan gentleman named Kāzī Ramzān Alī. Outside the headquarters station, however, the country was seriously threatened by the occupation of Gorakhpur by the rebels under Muhammad Husain, who had declared himself its *Chaklādār* under the king of Oudh; and in October one party of 500 men entered the district and plundered two factories, one near Daraulī belonging

* *The Aristocracy of Behar*, Calcutta Review, Vol. LXXVI, 1883.

to a native, Bābu Rām, and the other at Ganguā to Mr. McLeod, whose assistants had barely time to escape. After this, special measures had to be taken for the defence of the district; and a Gurkha regiment together with Captain Sotheby's Naval Brigade being stationed at Siwān, the rebels fell back, and the Sonpur fair was held as usual and passed off quietly.

Subsequently, in December 1857, another small body of rebels crossed from Gorakhpur and attacked the outpost of Guthnī, which was held by a detachment of 55 Sikhs, who, thinking a large force were on them, fled without offering any resistance. Reinforcements from the Gurkhas and Naval Brigade were promptly sent up, but before their arrival the enemy had escaped across the river after burning the Sikh lines. Towards the close of this month Jang Bahādur arrived, with a Nepalese army, and on the 26th December Colonel Rowcroft, with a force of less than 1,000 men, defeated a force of not less than 6,000 or 7,000 rebels at Sohanpur on the Gorakhpur frontier; while a successful fight took place on the same day at Sāhibganj, 5 miles from Pīpra, between two regiments sent out by Jang Bahādur and a party of rebels. These successes had the effect of clearing the districts of the Patna Division north of the Ganges; and after this, though Chaprā was several times threatened, there was no real danger for some time. A force of sailors and Sikhs was posted at Chaprā; a levy of 200 men was raised and organized by Mr. McDonell, the Sub-Deputy Opium Agent at Siwān, while two armed steamers, the Jumna and Meghna, cruised in the Ganges and Gogrā.

In April 1858 there were grave apprehensions that Kuar Singh might advance on this district; and once, when an incursion seemed imminent, the ladies, and treasure amounting to 6 lakhs, were sent to Dinapore, while the residents set to work to fortify the house of the Rājā of Hathwā. These fears were not unnatural, as it was estimated that as many as 10,000 sepoys were natives of Sāran. It was well known that the treasury of the Rājā contained property to the value of a crore of rupees, which might well tempt them to make a dash into Sāran; "nor," remarked the Lieutenant-Governor, "should we, in the event of any attempts on the place, have been able to render the slightest assistance to this loyal family, which had stood firmly by us during the whole disturbances." No attack, however, was made by any large force, though the district was infested by scattered bands of mutineers. One such party delivered a night attack on Captain Miles' outpost at Itwā, but were repulsed by the Siwān levy and a few Sikhs; and a few days later Captain Miles retaliated by attacking them at a place called Lahejī and

drove them in rout before him. After this, the rebels not finding the support and sympathy they expected, left the district in peace.

This sketch of the course of the Mutiny in Sāran would be incomplete without a mention of the District Magistrate, Mr. Fraser McDonell. When the European residents left Chaprā at the end of July 1857 and took refuge in Dinapore, Mr. McDonell seized the opportunity to volunteer for the expedition which started under the command of Captain Dunbar for the relief of Arrah. As is well known, this expedition ended in a disastrous failure. The troops fell into an ambuscade; the survivors fell back in utter rout; and it was at this juncture that Mr. McDonell distinguished himself. To quote from the account given in Sir John Kaye's History of the Sepoy War:—"Disastrous as was the retreat, it was not all disgraceful. Individual acts of heroism saved the honour of the British character. Two volunteers, Mr. McDonell and Mr. Ross Mangles, of the Civil Service, besides doing excellent service on the march, made themselves remarkable by acts of conspicuous daring. The former, though wounded, was one of the last men to enter the boats. The insurgents had taken the oars of his boat and had lashed the rudder, so that though the wind was favourable for retreat, the current carried the boat back to the river bank. Thirty-five soldiers were in the boat, sheltered from fire by the usual thatch covering; but while the rudder was fixed, the inmates remained at the mercy of the enemy. At this crisis, Mr. McDonell stepped out from the shelter, climbed on to the roof of the boat, perched himself on the rudder and cut the lashings, amidst a storm of bullets from the contiguous bank. Strangely enough, not a ball struck him; the rudder was loosened, the boat answered to the helm, and by Mr. McDonell's brilliant act, the crew were saved from certain destruction."

Mr. McDonell received the Victoria Cross as a reward for his gallantry; and subsequently was specially selected to accompany the force under Brigadier Douglas and General Lugard in Azamgarh. During his absence Mr. Richardson, the Collector, performed the duties of District Magistrate, and showed himself very active and successful in the pursuit and apprehension of mutineers. Another officer of the same name who distinguished himself was Mr. E. McDonell, the Sub-Deputy Opium Agent, who raised and organized the Siwān levy; and last, but not least, among those who did good service was the Rājā of Hathwā, who, in the words of the Lieutenant-Governor, "came forward with offers of assistance, placed men and elephants at the disposal of Government, and gave praiseworthy aid and support to Government during the whole progress of the rebellion."

At this time Sāran constituted one district with Champāran. A Magistrate had been stationed, however, at Motīhāri since 1837; and in 1866 Champāran was formed into a separate district with a distinct revenue and magisterial jurisdiction. The district of Sāran thus acquired its present dimensions. FORMATION OF THE DISTRICT.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

GROWTH OF POPULATION. THE first census was taken in 1872, and the result was to show, for the present district area, a total population of 2,076,640 persons. At the next census, taken in 1881, the number had risen to 2,295,207 representing an increase of 10½ per cent., but this is partly attributed to improved enumeration, as it is believed that the first census was wanting in accuracy and completeness. During the next decade also the population grew steadily, and in 1891 the number of inhabitants enumerated was 2,465,007, or 7·4 per cent. more than in 1881. At the last census, taken in 1901, it was found that the population had decreased to 2,409,509 or by 2·2 per cent.

Census of 1901. The decrease of 55,498 persons disclosed by the census of 1901 is ascribed to three causes, viz., famine, a consequent reduction in the birth-rate, and plague. The famine of 1897 told severely on the people, and though it caused no immediate mortality—the number of deaths recorded in 1897 was, in fact, 11 per cent. less than the average of the preceding three years—it reduced their vitality and lowered the birth-rate. By the time of census, however, the people had recovered from its effects, and it is probable that the decrease would not have been so great, had it not been for the outbreak of plague, which assumed epidemic proportions during the winter of 1899-1900 and reappeared with renewed intensity in the succeeding cold weather. The general results of the census are summed up as follows in the Bengal Census Report :—"The net result of the last census is a decrease of 2·2 per cent. For this the Sadar subdivision, which has lost 5·5 per cent., and Daraulī thāna in Siwān are responsible. This is the tract which was suffering from plague at the time of the census. The rest of the district has almost exactly the same population as it had ten years ago. The decrease is greatest where the plague was worst, *i.e.*, in Sonpur, Chaprā and Parsā thānas. It may, therefore, be concluded that, while the general want of progress is due to the adverse balance of migration and to the fact that the district is unable to support a much greater population

than it already possessed in 1891, the plague is to blame for the greater part of the decrease that has occurred in the southern part of the district."

The principal statistics of the census of 1901 are reproduced below:—

Subdivision.	Area in square miles.	Number of Towns.	Number of Villages.	Population.	Population per square mile.	Percentage of variation in population between 1891 and 1901.
Chaprā ...	1,048	2	2,179	972,718	928	−5·5
Gopālganj ...	788	1	2,148	635,047	806	+0·1
Siwān ...	838	1	1,528	801,744	957	+0·1
District Total	*2,674*	*4*	*5,855*	*2,409,509*	*901*	*−2·2*

General characteristics. Density of population. This decrease of population is not altogether to be regretted in view of the great pressure on the soil already existing. No other district in Bengal except Muzaffarpur has such a teeming population, there being no less than 901 persons per square mile. The density of population is evenly distributed throughout the district; only one thāna (Gopālganj) having less than 800 persons per square mile, while only two thānas (Mānjhi and Siwān) support over 1,000 persons per square mile. The Siwān subdivision, with 957 persons to the square mile, is now the most densely populated part of the district, and has changed places with the headquarters subdivision during the last decade; the Gopālganj subdivision, with 806 persons to the square mile, is the most sparsely inhabited, as it contains a large area of *diāra* land and an unusual proportion of extensive *chaurs* or rice swamps.

The following remarks regarding the pressure of the people on the soil are quoted from Mr. Kerr's Settlement Report:—"On the whole, leaving out of account any great economic revolution, of which there are at present no signs, the situation may be summed up thus. Gopālganj is capable of supporting a slight increase of population. Siwān has probably reached its utmost limits, while in the Sadar, and particularly in the densely populated thānas of Mānjhi, Chaprā and Sonpur with their high rent rates, decline has already set in. Nor is this to be deplored. On the contrary, it is a matter for congratulation that emigration should be growing in favour in a district where it is so greatly needed, and it is a further relief to the situation that North Bihār contains no body of peasantry more alert or more industrious, or more ready, within limits, to take advantage of improvements calculated to increase the productive powers of the soil."

Migration. There is also no district in Bihār whose population evinces such a readiness to emigrate, either permanently or in search of temporary employment. In 1901 no less than 242,490 persons (174,170 males and 68,320 females), or more than one-tenth of the population of the district, were enumerated away from their homes; about one-fifth of the absentees were enumerated in contiguous districts, but the remainder had gone further afield and were found in large numbers in Mymensingh, Rangpur, Calcutta and the 24-Parganas. For the most part, this exodus does not represent permanent migration, for the majority of the emigrants go away only for a time, and return after intervals of six months, or one or two years. Every year, at the slack season during the cold weather, thousands migrate to Eastern Bengal and Assam in search of employment, returning in May or June for the agricultural operations which begin with the bursting of the monsoon. The improvement in railway communications has greatly facilitated their movements; and while, on the one hand, more people leave the district, on the other, they return home at more frequent intervals than formerly.

The pressure on the soil, which drives such vast numbers of Sāran men abroad, leaves little room for others to enter; and consequently the volume of immigration is much smaller, the number of immigrants enumerated in 1901 being only 56,424. Prior to 1891, there was a strong flow of population from Sāran to its neighbours, but during the last decade the tendency seems to have been in the other direction, especially in the case of the adjoining districts of the United Provinces, which have given 32,064 persons to Sāran as compared with only 14,992 in 1891.

Sex and marriage. Owing to the large volume of emigration, the proportion of females is the largest in Bengal, there being 12 females to every 10 males. This disproportion is very marked in the case of some thānas, such as Mānjhi, Mashrak, Parsā and Sonpur, all in the headquarters subdivision, the thāna last-named being particularly a centre of emigration and also the thāna most largely inhabited by the class who enlist as soldiers. Infant marriage is much less common than in other parts of Bihār, and there has been a marked falling off during the last two decades in the proportion of married people, and also in the number of children brought into the world, which points to an increasing use of preventive checks on the growth of population.

Towns and villages. There are altogether four towns, viz., Chaprā, Siwān, Revelganj and Mīrganj, which contain a total population of 81,120 persons or 3 per cent. of the total population. Of these towns, three are municipalities, viz., Chaprā, with a population of 45,901,

Siwān (15,756) and Revelganj (9,765); the fourth, Mīrganj, is a large bazar, which, with some contiguous villages, was treated as a town for the purposes of the census.

Chaprā, the principal civil station, has, like other riparian towns, lost much of its commercial importance with the advent of the railway, but the decrease of 11,000 in its population since 1891 was caused mainly by a temporary exodus due to plague, which was raging at the time of the census. Revelganj, another river-side town on the Gogrā, about 7 miles west of Chaprā, also shows a decrease due to the same causes. This place used to be the principal mart of the district, being the port of exchange between the river-borne trade of Bengal and that of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, but its commerce has declined owing to the competition of the railway. Siwān, the headquarters of the subdivision of that name, and generally known as Alīganj Sewān, is comparatively prosperous. Mīrganj is a large market near Hathwā, which, with the adjoining villages, contains a population of 9,698 persons.

Altogether 97 per cent. of the population is contained in villages, which are mostly small, the average number of inhabitants being only 397, as compared with 602 in North Bihār as a whole. Since the census of 1872, however, there has been a steady increase in the size of the villages. Land is so precious in Sāran that the building of new villages is almost an impossibility, and the erection of a new *tolā* or hamlet, and even of a number of new houses, is no easy task; still, the ever-increasing population must be accommodated somewhere, and this is done by over-crowding existing houses, or more rarely by adding another house to the village site.

Village officials. The *patwāri* is the chief village official, but where, as is usually the case in Sāran, villages belong to several sets of proprietors, there are generally as many *patwāris* as there are estates or *pattis* in the village. Few of them, except in the larger estates, are registered in the Collectorate; but the *patwāri's* power does not depend on his position as a quasi-Government servant. Until the record-of-rights was prepared, he was generally the only person in the village who was in a position to give evidence as to the rents payable or as to the amount due. There was practically no check on him, and he was courted by landlord and tenant alike. His pay may be anything from eight annas to Rs. 25 a month. Those at the bottom of the scale are in charge of very small estates containing only a few ryots' holdings, and are merely ordinary cultivators who assist their landlords in keeping rent accounts.

In big estates they draw pay at the higher rate, occupy a respectable social position, and are generally called *Dīwāns*.

The *patwāri*, however, does not look on his pay as his chief source of income. As a rule, he has a large holding, either in his own name or in that of his relations, which usually contains the best lands in the village and is assessed at a low rental. Apart from his gains on special occasions, *e.g.*, when disputes arise in the village and each party is eager to gain him over, he has certain regular perquisites which are paid without demur. He gets a fee called *tahrīr*, amounting usually to half an anna per rupee, on the rent paid for every receipt which he issues to the ryot's; on the Dāwāt Pūjā, the great festival of the Kāyasth or writer-caste, he generally manages to levy a similar amount; and on every settlement of lands or entry of a transfer in the rent-roll, he takes a *salāmi* varying in amount with the position of the transferee and the ability of the *patwāri* to impose upon him. Ample opportunities for peculation are also placed in his way during the appraisement of crops on land paying a produce rent, the sale of the produce of land cultivated by the landlord, and similar occasions. When it is remembered that not only the *patwāri* but his forefathers have been intimately connected with every detail of village life for generations, the only wonder is that his powers are not more abused.

Next to the *patwāri* comes the *jeth-raiyat*, who is usually found only in large estates. He is generally an important ryot in the village, whose duties are sometimes to collect the rents and make them over to the *patwāri*, and sometimes merely to induce the ryots to go to the latter to pay them personally. He is remunerated occasionally by a percentage on the rent collections, but usually by being given a remission on his own rent or by being allowed to hold his lands at a favourable rate. The village artisans are nearly always paid in grain. The blacksmith gets the produce of 10 or 12 *dhurs* of land for each plough which he is required to keep in repair throughout the year; and the washerman and barber get a smaller quantity of grain for each member of the family for whom their services are required.*

Houses. The wealthier classes live in brick houses, many of which are double-storeyed and have verandahs ornamented with rough but effective carving. The houses of the cultivators are, as a rule, mud huts, the walls of which are composed of earth dug up in the vicinity, with which broken pottery is mixed, so as to impart solidity. The roof is, as a rule, made of thatch supported

* J. H. Kerr, *Sāran Settlement Report*, Calcutta, 1903.

by a few bamboos, a frequent source of fire. Substantial cultivators alone can afford tiled houses, which have never been so common as elsewhere, owing to the liability of the country to inundation; in fact, before the construction of embankments a tiled roof was a useless luxury for people who had to be ready to shift their huts at very short notice. The labourer's house is a still more primitive hut, the walls being only common thatching grass and the roof a thin covering of the same material supported by a bamboo or two. The houses of the well-to-do generally consist of four buildings facing one another with a court-yard in the centre. In one of these members of the family sleep; a second is used as a store-room for rice, etc.; a third serves as a cook-house; and the fourth is given up to the cows and live-stock. The furniture is generally meagre. A few rough beds made of coarse string with a bamboo or wooden frame-work, some brass utensils for eating and washing purposes, some earthen cooking vessels and receptacles for water, a chest or two, and a circular receptacle (*ko:hi*), with a mud cover and mud sides, for keeping grain, are all that is usually found.

The poorest classes wear nothing more than a *langota*, *i.e.*, a narrow strip of cloth fastened to a cord round the waist, but the cultivator wears a *dhotī* and a piece of cloth (*gamchhā*) worn over the shoulder or on the head with one end hanging down; a corner of this cloth is often knotted and used like a purse for keeping spare cash, receipts, etc. The man who habitually wears a *pagrī* belongs to a higher grade, and the average tenant wears a head-dress on special occasions only. As we get higher up the scale, we find a *mirzāi* or coat added to *dhotī* and *pagrī*. A Muhammadan, however, wears a *chapkan*, *i.e.*, a long coat coming down to the knees, a small cap or *pagrī*, and trousers (*pāijāmā*), which are sometimes long loose drawers and sometimes tight-fitting pantaloons. Women of the cultivating class generally wear a *sārī*, a long piece of cloth thrown over the head and wound round the body, and women of the poorer classes a coarse cotton sheet called *putli*; the women-folk of the prosperous tenants also wear a *jhūlā* or bodice. **Dress.**

Rice, which is the staple food of the people in Bengal, is not the staple food of the poor in this district, but rather that of the well-to-do. The majority live on maize, other cereals, such as barley, and various pulses. For the most part they eat these parched in the form of *sattu*, *i.e.*, a flour prepared from one or other of the various grains and pulses, the meal being accompanied by vegetables, salt and few simple condiments. Fish are much relished and can be got cheaply in the rains. **Food.**

Language. The vernacular current all over the district is the dialect of Bihāri Hindī called Bhojpurī after the *pargana* of Bhojpur in Shāhābād. Several varieties of this dialect are found. The form prevalent in the tract bordering on the Ganges is classified by Dr. Grierson as Standard Bhojpurī, but it has been modified by the dialects spoken in the adjoining districts. The language of Muzaffarpur, which lies to the east of Sāran, across the river Gandak, is Western Maithilī, which is largely infected with Bhojpurī, and is in fact, a border form of speech between the two dialects. Again, the language of Patna, opposite the south-east corner of Sāran, is Magahī. Hence, as might be expected, the language of the east of Sāran is tinged with Maithilī peculiarities, and that of the south-east with Magahī ones. In the centre and north the form of speech is what Dr. Grierson describes as Northern Standard Bhojpurī, *i.e.*, the speech of the Doāb of the Gandak and Bogrā, omitting the tract of country immediately opposite Shāhābād. This dialect exhibits some local peculiarities, *bāte* being used for "he is" instead of *bāre* as in Shāhābād, while in the past tense of the verb, *u* is substituted for the *l* which is usually typical of Bihāri, *e.g.*, *dekhue*, he saw.

Urdū is spoken by the better class of Muhammadans, who pride themselves on speaking the language of fallen greatness; while Kāyasths and middle class Musalmāns use the Awadhī dialect of Eastern Hindī, *i.e.*, literally the language of Oudh. This dialect is also used as a sort of language of politeness, especially when Europeans are addressed, by the rustics, who have picked it up from their Musalmān friends and imagine it to be the Hindustānī of polite society. The Devanāgari and the Kaithī characters are both used in writing Awadhī; and the Persian character is also occasionally used by the educated classes.

Character of the people. "Bhojpurī," says Doctor Grierson, "is the practical language of an energetic race, which is ever ready to accommodate itself to circumstances, and which has made its influence felt all over India. The Bengali and the Bhojpurī are two of the great civilisers of Hindōstān, the former with his pen and the latter with his cudgel . . . . The Bhojpurī-speaking country is inhabited by a people curiously different from the others who speak Bihārī dialects. They form the fighting nation of Hindustān. An alert and active nationality, with few scruples, and considerable abilities, dearly loving a fight for fighting's sake, they have spread all over Aryan India, each man ready to carve his fortune out of any opportunity which may present itself to him. They furnish a rich mine of recruitment to the Hindustānī army, and, on the other

hand, they took a prominent part in the mutiny of 1857. As fond as an Irishman is of a stick, the long-boned, stalwart Bhojpurī, with his staff in hand, is a familiar object striding over fields far from his home. Thousands of them have emigrated to British Colonies and have returned rich men; every year still larger numbers wander over Northern Bengal and seek employment, either honestly, as *pālki*-bearers, or otherwise, as dacoits. Every Bengal zemīndār keeps a posse of these men, euphemistically termed *darwāns*, to keep his tenants in order. Calcutta, where they are employed, and feared, by the less heroic natives of Bengal, is full of them."*

These remarks apply with special force to the men of Sāran.

Altogether 2,124,641 persons or 88·2 per cent. of the population are Hindus, and practically all the rest are Muhammadans, who aggregate 284,541 or 11·8 per cent.; only 314 persons were returned as Christians, and 13 persons as members of other religions, at the census of 1901. There has been practically no change in the proportion which the Hindus and Muhammadans bear to the total population since the first census; nor was this to be expected in a district so conservative as Sāran, so simply agricultural, and so remote from the influences which bring about a social or religious revolution. In 1872, the Hindus composed 88·30 per cent. of the population, in 1881 they were 88·26 per cent, and in 1891 they were very nearly the same, viz., 88·18 per cent. The Muhammadans in the same three years accounted for 11·70, 11·73 and 11·81 per cent. respectively. RELIGIONS.

In spite of the generally conservative nature of the people, there are occasionally outbursts of religious excitement. As an instance of this in recent years, may be mentioned three movements which took place in 1893-95, viz., the anti-kine-killing agitation, the ploughmen's begging movement and the tree-daubing mystery.

The first movement appears to have been due to the activity of the Gorakshinī Sabhās or associations for the protection of cattle. These societies, the legitimate object of which is the care of diseased, aged, and otherwise useless cattle, started a crusade against the killing of kine, sent out emissaries to preach their doctrines, and collected subscriptions to further their objects. In April 1893 several religious mendicants entered Sāran from the west and preached the well-known doctrines of the Gorakshinī society to which they belonged. Not only were Anti-kine-killing agitation.

* *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. V, Part II, Calcutta, 1903.

largely attended meetings held in the bigger market towns, but in many a little village community officers were appointed and resolutions carried on lines similar to those adopted at the larger meetings. Everywhere subscriptions for the preservation of the cow were collected, all classes of Hindus contributing according to their means. The cultivator who found his neighbour's cattle trespassing in his field no longer drove them to the pound, but took them to the village *panchāyat*, who in their turn levied a fine upon the owner. Collecting boxes were placed in liquor shops and other places of general resort, all for the benefit of the general fund. So universal was the subscription that in many instances Musalmāns and Chamārs were forced against their own interest to contribute to the general fund. The excitement was increased by the news of the Bakrīd riots in the neighbouring districts of Ballia and Gorakhpur. As the time of Muharram of 1893 approached, there prevailed among Muhammadans a feeling of unrest and alarm, aggravated in some instances by the taunts and threats of hostile Hindus; but the festival passed off peacefully.

In the meantime, however, secret letters were handed from village to village purporting to come from the pandits of Benāres. Acting on the instructions contained in these *patras*, the Hindus proceeded to persecute the Muhammadans. They refused to allow them to draw water at the village wells, where, from time immemorial, they and their fathers had peacefully done so side by side with the Hindus: the pots in which the village Kāndu had parched the corn both of Muhammadans and Hindus alike were now ordered to be broken. New and unpolluted pots were prepared for the stronger sect, while individual Musalmāns were put to the somewhat new experience of parching their own corn. The butcher driving his cattle along the road became an object of suspicion and was challenged accordingly. Such an interference with village customs naturally caused considerable tension of feeling throughout the locality; and the agitation thus set on foot culminated in a serious riot at Basantpur. A drove of cattle intended for the Dinapore Commissariat was stopped on the 31st August by a riotous mob of Hindus at a place called Bāla on the high road between Champāran and Chaprā. The officer in charge of the Basantpur thāna brought the cattle to the thāna, where they were placed for safety inside the thāna compound in charge of an armed guard despatched from Chaprā. Incited, however, by the preaching of a wandering propagandist, a large mob of Hindus collected from different villages for miles round, armed with *lāthis*, and

after an unsuccessful parley with the police, with a view to purchasing the cattle, made a determined assault on the thāna in an attempt to rescue them forcibly. The police, however, stood their ground well, and after discharging blank cartridge with no effect, fired a round of buck-shot, which wounded several of the assailants, two of them mortally, and caused the mob to disperse. No other riot of such a serious nature took place, and though there were some petty ebullitions, the excitement gradually died down.

Ploughmen's begging movement. The ploughmen's begging movement, or, as it should more properly be called, the Mahādeo *pūjā*, was a curious exhibition of religious feeling which occurred soon afterwards. All ploughmen, the story goes, were obliged to give their cattle three days' rest and go round the neighbouring villages carrying the plough and begging. With the proceeds three wheaten cakes were prepared—one for the ploughman himself, one for his cattle, while the third had to be buried under their stalls. This penance was performed by the people in consequence of a rumour that it had been imposed by the god Mahādeo to expiate the sin committed by the agricultural community in overworking their cattle. One evening it is said, as a poor ryot was ploughing his field, a man appeared before him and asked why he was working his cattle so late. He replied that his poverty compelled him to do so, and thereupon Mahādeo—for it was he—waved his hand, and the cattle vanished. The peasant then begged that he would bring them back, and Mahādeo promised that the cattle would return, if he performed the penance above described. For some time the people continued to carry out, with scrupulous care, the orders which they supposed had been given them by the god. The elaborate nature of the penance gives reason, however, to suppose that it had been carefully thought out; and its inception and spread among the villagers have been attributed to the efforts of those interested in the Gorakshinī agitation to keep the movement afloat.

Tree-daubing mystery. Tree-daubing was another widespread movement, the meaning of which afforded many grounds for speculation. By the most reliable reports it commenced about the latter end of February 1894 in the north-east corner of Bihār in the neighbourhood of the Janakpur shrine, which lies across the border in Nepāl. The movement consisted in marking trees with daubs of mud, in which were stuck hairs of different animals. It slowly spread through the Gangetic districts eastwards into Bhāgalpur and Purnea, and westward through many of the districts of the United Provinces. As an explanation of the movement, it was suggested

at the time that the sign was intended as an advertisement of the shrine of Janakpur; and this view was accepted officially. Others, however, held that the marks originated merely with cattle rubbing themselves against trees. Others again pointed out that it was suspicious that it should follow the Gorokshinī agitation, which was hostile to the administration, and that it was intended to promote some movement antagonistic to British rule.

Muhammadans. Muhammadans are fairly evenly distributed over the whole district. They are most numerous in the Siwān thāna, where they aggregate 65,368 persons, or 1 Muhammadan to every 4 Hindus; and the proportion is least in Sonpur thāna, which is almost purely Hindu, their being only 6,005 Musalmāns to 94,354 Hindus. With the exception of a few families of good origin but decayed fortunes, the Muhammadans of Sāran are engaged in cultivation, but many of them also weave cloth and stamp it. Jolāhās, numbering 97,222 persons, are most numerous, and are followed by Sheikhs, who number 62,548. The majority of them are probably the descendants of local converts to Islām, and the same is believed to be the case with many of those who now rank as Pathāns (18,500), who resemble Rājputs in physique. There are only 6,000 Saiyids, probably the descendants of foreign immigrants, and there are also a few Mughals, found chiefly during the cold weather in the towns of Chaprā and Siwān, where they sell fruit and woollen clothes imported from up-country and Afghānistān. There are no particular sects calling for special mention, with the exception of the Wahābis; but the latter are few in number, and it is reported that the Wahābi reformers have hitherto achieved but little success.

Christian Missions. The majority of Christians are Europeans employed as Government officials or engaged in the indigo industry, and the number of native Christians, according to the census of 1901, is only 78. The oldest Christian Mission in Sāran is the German Evangelical Lutheran Mission, which has been established at Chaprā since 1840, but has made little progress. There is a Roman Catholic Mission at Chaprā, which is one of the stations of the Prefecture Apostolic of Bettiah and Nepāl in charge of the Capuchin Fathers of the Tyrolese Province; there are also outstations at Sonpur and Siwān. A Protestant Mission, called the "Regions Beyond Mission," has recently been started at Siwān, where it has opened a day school, in which both the vernacular and English are taught to boys too poor to attend the High school.

The marginal table shows the different Hindu castes with a strength of over 25,000. It will be observed that the Aryan castes are strongly represented, possibly because Sāran lay on their line of march eastward, Brāhmans, Rājputs, Bābhans, Kāyasths and Ahīrs accounting for more than one-third of the entire population. Among other castes those excellent husbandmen, the Koiris and Kurmīs, are specially numerous, and the common Bihār functional castes are well represented. The following is a brief description of the castes numbering over 50,000, and also of the Atiths and Doms, who are unusually prominent in Sāran. PRINCIPAL CASTES.

Ahīr	...	289,504
Rājput	...	259,053
Brāhman	...	184,322
Koiri	...	168,616
Chamār	...	120,830
Kurmī	...	116,615
Bābhan	...	106,098
Kāndu	...	92,402
Nuniā	...	80,143
Dosādh	...	79,168
Teli	...	70,743
Gonrs	...	51,520
Kāyasth	...	48,519
Lohār	...	47,435
Hajjām	...	34,085
Kahār	...	33,181
Kumhār	...	30,474
Atith	...	26,753

Ahīrs, also known as Goālās, rank first in point of numerical strength. They are found all over the district, but are most numerous along the banks of the Gogrā and Gandak, because the banks of these rivers afford good grazing for their herds of cattle. Their principal occupations are cattle breeding and cultivation; the women, who are very hard-working, add to the family earnings by making and selling cow-dung cakes, milk, *ghī* and curd. They are divided into four subcastes, viz., Majraut, Kishnaut, Goriā and Kanaujiā. Of these the Kishnaut subcaste claims precedence on the ground that Krishna was born in their clan. Widow marriages obtain among all the four subcastes, and they are all proverbial for marrying their children in infancy. The Majraut, Kishnaut and Kanaujiā subcastes are said to include a number of thieves, but the Goriās, who are famous dealers in *ghī*, escape this reproach. Ahīrs.

Rājputs are scattered all over the district, but are most numerous in the Mashrak, Chaprā and Daraulī thānas, where whole villages of Rājputs may be found. Their means of living is, for the most part, cultivation, the majority being occupancy ryots, while a few are tenure-holders and zamīndārs. Sepoys, peons and constables are recruited from their ranks, and some of them have taken to horse breeding and dealing. There is a noticeable disparity in the numbers of the two sexes, due to the emigration of male adults in search of employment in the army and police in other parts of India. The only big Rājput zamīndār in the district is said to be the Bābu of Amnaur. Rājputs.

The number of Brāhmans in Sāran rose from 158,109 in 1872 to 173,362 in 1881, fell to 164,675 in 1891, and rose again Brāhmans.

to 184,322 in 1901. Their hereditary occupation is priesthood, but a large number of them have taken to cultivation as a means of livelihood. The divisions most strongly represented in Sāran are Kanaujiā and Sākadwīpī; the former, who are subdivided into Kanaujiā proper and Saryupari or Sarwaria, are, it is said, considered degenerate in consequence of their having left their native place in Oudh and migrated to the banks of the Sarju or Gogrā during the time of Rāma, and also because they habitually accept alms. They have, however, strict scruples regarding ceremonial purity, especially in matters of food and drink, which have given rise to a popular proverb—*Tin Kanaujia, terah chulhā*, *i.e.*, three Kanaujiās require thirteen fireplaces.

Koiris. The Koiris are industrious, peaceful and contented cultivators, in great demand among zamīndārs, who are always glad to settle lands with them. They are born market gardeners, and in addition to the staple crops grow potatoes, various vegetables, and poppy; the cultivation of poppy in this district is, in fact, mainly carried on by them.

Chamārs. The Chamārs work as tanners and labourers, and hold a very low position, as they are continually defiled by contact with dead bullocks, etc., to the hides of which they have a recognized right. They are, not without reason, frequently suspected of poisoning cattle in order to obtain the hides, especially when they have to make good advances of money received from hide dealers. They supply the villagers with leather thongs for their whips and fastenings for their ploughs, repairing the latter when necessary. They also act as village criers and as musicians at ceremonies; their women-folk are the village midwives. Such is their reputation for stealing that the word "*chamāri*" is equivalent to "*chori*," and is generally used by the villagers to mean theft. They are enabled to carry on dishonest practices with some impunity, for fear that their wives may refuse their services at child-birth.

Kurmīs. Kurmīs are an agricultural caste, mainly engaged in cultivation, but many of the poorer members of the caste are labourers. Kurmīs of the Jaiswār subcaste engage in menial service, both males and females entering domestic service; members of this subcaste are mostly found in the towns, or in villages where zamīndārs and other well-to-do persons have their residences.

Bābhans. The Bābhans in this district are generally well-to-do, the majority being occupancy ryots; they also include a fair proportion of landlords, and some serve as peons and constables. The principal Bābhan zamīndārs in Sāran are the Mahārājā of Hathwā and the Bābus of Mānjhi, Chainpur, Parsā, Russī,

Khairā, Sānrhā and Bāla. The Bābhans in this district also call themselves zamīndār Brāhmans and Eksaria Brāhmans, the latter name being due to a local tradition that the small village of Eksar was the residence of their ancestors.

Kāndus and Gonrs. Kāndus are the grain parchers of the district, and are found in almost every village, where they keep shops for selling rice, pulse, salt, tobacco, etc. The wealthier among them are also money-lenders. The Gonrs are a caste allied to the Kāndus, who have generally the same occupations; they also fry and sell *bhujā* and *sattu*, and sometimes serve as menial servants. According to the census of 1901, the Gonrs of Sāran account for five-eighths of the total number of Gonrs in Bengal and Eastern Bengal.

Nuniās. The traditional occupation of the Nuniās is the manufacture of saltpetre, but they are expert diggers and make the best labourers in the district. They migrate in large numbers in search of employment on roads, embankments, railway lines, etc. The females assist the males in earthwork and in making saltpetre, but, as a rule, do not migrate.

Dosādhs. The Dosādhs are a low caste, who work as cultivators and practically monopolize the duties of road and village watchmen, *goraits* and *chaukīdārs*. Those who cannot find such employment, and have no land, work as general labourers, ploughmen, etc. They also breed pigs, and their women, who work as hard as men, cut grass for sale and work as field labourers. They have the reputation of being inveterate thieves, but if one of them is paid a sufficient amount to act as *chaukīdār*, his confreres usually abstain from plundering the houses under his charge. They are, as a rule, of a low type, and appear to have traces of an aboriginal descent. The main features of their worship are the sacrifice of pigs and libations of liquor.

Telis. The Telis have a monopoly of making and selling oil, this being the traditional occupation of the caste. A large proportion, however, are grain merchants, and many combine money-lending with their trade. A large proportion of the trade of the district is in their hands, and a popular saying is "*Turk, Teli, tār, in tinon Bihār,*" *i.e.*, Bihār is made up of Muhammadans, Telis and toddy-palms.

Atiths. At the census of 1901, 50,042 Atiths were enumerated in Bengal and Eastern Bengal, and of these no less than 26,753 were found in Sāran. The following account of the Atiths is quoted from the Bengal Census Report of 1901.

Atith means an "unexpected guest" and was originally a general designation of all wandering Saiva ascetics, but it is now more specialized and is generally applied to the followers of

Sankarāchārjya, who are more precisely known as Dasnāmi with reference to the ten subsects or *kuris* into which his followers were ultimately divided. At the present time, the Atiths are divided into two main classes, Sannyāsi Atiths or ascetics and Gharbāri Atiths or householders. Both classes are addressed as Bābāji as a token of respect. They are often known to outsiders as Gosain. The following more detailed particulars regarding the two sections of Atiths are based mainly on information received from Sāran, where they are most numerous.

Sankarāchārjya, who is regarded by his followers as an incarnation of Siva, had four disciples, and these disciples established the ten orders of ascetics or Atiths enumerated in Mr. Risley's article on Dasnāmi. Sankarāchārjya's mission was to extirpate Buddhism, and wherever a Buddhist monastery was found, a *math* of his own followers was established. These ascetics took a vow of celibacy and were supposed to devote themselves entirely to religious matters. But large landed estates gradually became attached to the *maths*, and the inmates, though they did not marry, formed liaisons with women of different classes. Many of these *maths* still survive, but, side by side with the anchorites or Sannyāsi Atiths, corresponding groups of householders or Gharbāri Atiths have gradually came into existence. They attribute their origin to an intrigue between a Sannyāsi Atith and a Bābhan woman, and it seems not unlikely that they are the descendants of the women attached to the *maths*. Or it may be that they are the descendants of followers of the sect who never took the vow of celibacy, or of backsliders who broke their vows and settled down and married. The fact that outsiders frequently address them as Gosain seems, however, to indicate that their ancestors were spiritual guides, and the possession by many of them of grants of rent-free land points in the same direction.

They wear the same distinctive yellow turban and necklace as the Sannyāsis, and retain the terms Giri, Purī, etc., which they add after their own name. The fact that a man belongs to one or other of these classes or *kuris* does not, however, limit the choice of a wife, and the only restriction in this respect is that a man may not marry in his father's *gotra*, nor within the fourth or fifth degree of relationship on the mother's side. The marriage ceremony is of the ordinary type, and the painting of the bride's forehead with vermilion constitutes the binding element. Among the well-to-do, infant marriage is in vogue, but the poorer classes marry as adults. Widows are not allowed to marry again, and outsiders are not admitted to the caste.

The Atiths are served by good Brāhmans on ceremonial occasions, but their Gurus or spiritual guides are taken from their own community. They are, in the main, worshippers of Siva, to whom flowers, etc., are offered, and goats are sometimes sacrificed. In Sāran it is said that the godlings Bandi and Goraiyā are also worshipped. The Gharbāri Atiths sometimes burn their dead, but both they and the Sannyāsis usually bury them in a sitting position with their hands clasped as in meditation. This burial is called *samādhi.* Sometimes the dead bodies are thrown into the Ganges supported by floats so as to maintain the sitting posture. They perform the usual *srāddha*, but those who are ascetics offer *pinda* only to their deceased spiritual leaders. In Sāran the Gharbāri Atiths are fairly prosperous. Some are zamīndārs, and others are money-lenders and cultivators. A few are landless labourers, and some still follow their traditional occupation, mendicancy.

The Doms of Sāran number 9,212 persons and include two distinct classes, who may be described as non-criminal and criminal Doms. The first breed pigs and obtain a scanty livelihood by making and selling bamboo umbrellas, baskets and fans. They supply fuel with which to burn the dead bodies of Hindus, and in return are given the shrouds of the dead and some remuneration in cash; they also receive the leavings at Hindu feasts and ceremonies, which they regularly attend. They are a comparatively harmless class, generally depending on their earnings and such leavings. The other class are called Magahiyā Doms, a name believed to be derived from the fact that their original home was in Magah or Magadha, the old name of Bihār. In physical appearance, they are described as small and dark, with long tresses of unkempt hair and the peculiar beady eye of the non-Aryan; and there can be no doubt that they are of aboriginal descent. They are notorious thieves and bad characters, committing frequent burglaries, occasional highway robberies, and innumerable petty thefts. They do not cultivate or labour if they can help it, and their women only make occasional basket work as a pretence, their part being that of the spy, informer and disposer of stolen property. A fuller account of the Magahiyā Doms as a criminal caste and of the efforts made to reclaim them will be given in Chapter XI, and it will suffice here to mention the way in which their criminal propensities have reacted on their religious ceremonies. Doms.

"Systematic robbery," writes Sir H. H. Risley in *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, "is so far a recognized mode of life among the Magahiyā Doms that it has impressed itself on

their religion, and a distinct ritual is ordained for observance by those who go forth to commit a burglary. The object of veneration on these occasions is Sansāri Māi, whom some hold to be a form of Kālī, but who seems rather to be the earth-mother known to most primitive religions. No image, not even the usual lump of clay, is set up to represent the goddess : a circle one span and four fingers in diameter is drawn on the ground and smeared smooth with cow-dung. Squatting in front of this, the worshipper gashes his left arm with the curved Dom knife, and daubs five streaks of blood with his finger in the centre of the circle, praying in a low voice that a dark night may aid his designs ; that his booty may be ample ; and that he and his gang may escape detection."

A theory has been advanced that the gipsies of Europe may have been originally Doms of India, and it has been pointed out that Romany is almost letter for letter the same as Domani, the plural of Dom. "Domani," says Dr. Grierson, "is the plural form in the Bhojpurī dialect of the Bihār language. It was originally a genitive plural ; so that Romany Rye, 'a gipsy gentleman,' may be well compared with the Bhojpurī Domani Ray, 'a king of the Doms.' The Bhojpurī-speaking Doms are a famous race, and they have many points of resemblance with the gipsies of Europe. Thus, they are darker in complexion than the surrounding Bihāris, are great thieves, live by hunting, dancing, and telling fortunes; their women have a reputation for making love-philtres and medicines to procure abortion ; they keep fowls (which no orthodox Hindu will do), and are said to eat carrion. They are also great musicians and horsemen." It is possible that the Doms once extended over a great part of India, and in some places possessed considerable power, and it seems at least certain that the resemblance of the Bhojpurī and gipsy dialects is not confined to a similarity of name. The gipsy grammar is closely connected with Bhojpurī, or with its original Apabhransa Māgadhī Prākrit ; and there is an extraordinary similarity in the two vocabularies as well as a close grammatical connection between the two languages.*

The following is a curious illustration of the religious beliefs of the Doms, which has been furnished by a former Subdivisional Officer of Siwān. A man, named Kari Dom, had been much troubled by an evil spirit, which the wizard, whom he consulted, found to be the familiar spirit of a neighbour, Gokhul Dom. Kari thereupon came to an agreement with Gokhul that he would

* G. A Grierson, Introductory Note to an English Gipsy Index, Indian Antiquary, Vol. XV, 1886.

recall the evil spirit and never allow it to haunt Kari again, and that should the spirit ever trouble him, Gokhul would be liable to pay compensation amounting to Rs. 25. This agreement was carefully recorded on a formal document signed by witnesses, but in spite of the deed and the penalty to which Gokhul was liable, the evil spirit would not remain quiet and again visited Kari, with the result that he sought redress in the criminal courts, and brought a charge of cheating against the other party to the transaction.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

CLIMATE. SARAN enjoys the reputation, at least among the Indian population, of being the healthiest district in North Bihār. Fever is much less prevalent than in either Muzaffarpur or Champāran, though it is said that within the last 25 years malarial disease has been on the increase, owing to the extension of irrigation and to the obstacles to the drainage of the district caused by the Gandak embankment along its whole northern boundary, and the construction of the Bengal and North-Western Railway from east to west across its watershed. Moreover, the whole country is so closely cultivated that, in many places, the natural drainage channels have been brought under tillage, or are to a great extent blocked by the operations of agriculture; and the district would undoubtedly be rendered healthier by the drainage of some of its low-lying swamps. Fever, cholera and small-pox are endemic, and occasionally assume a severe epidemic form, while in recent years plague has been a terrible visitation, reducing the population both in the towns and country.

VITAL STATISTICS. It is impossible to verify the correctness of the belief that the district has become more unhealthy during the last 25 years, owing to the changes in the system of registering births and deaths which have taken place from time to time. In 1869 the duty of reporting deaths was imposed on the village *chaukīdārs*, and in 1876 the system was extended to births; but the returns received were so incomplete that they were soon discontinued, and, except in towns, deaths alone were registered until 1892, when the collection of statistics of births as well as of deaths was ordered, and the system now in vogue was introduced. Under this system vital occurrences are reported by the *chaukīdārs* to the police, and the latter submit monthly returns to the Civil Surgeon, by whom statistics for the whole district are prepared. These returns are at least sufficiently accurate for the purpose of calculating the approximate growth of the population and the relative healthiness or unhealthiness of different years.

It has been stated in the previous chapter that the result of the census of 1901 was to show a decrease of 55,498 persons or 2·2 per cent. since the census of 1891. This loss of population was not due altogether to a series of unhealthy years; for the decade was healthy until 1899, when plague first made its appearance, and between 1892 and 1900 the reported births exceeded the deaths by 83,725. Since the census of 1901, the population has decreased still further, the number of deaths reported in the six years ending in 1906 having exceeded the number of births by 15,330. The birth-rate has been unusually high, being over 40 per mille during four of the six years in question, but the mortality has been exceedingly heavy, owing to annual epidemics of plague, reaching the appalling figure of 50·15 per mille in 1905. The towns of Chaprā, Revelganj and Siwān have suffered especially severely, the average annual death-rate in the five years ending in 1905 being no less than 61·39, 91·03 and 57·31 per mille respectively, while in 1906 it was 60·36, 62·05 and 38·08 per mille respectively. The corresponding figures for the rural area were 41·39 per mille in the first 5 years and 37·89 per mille in 1906. The lowest birth-rate recorded in the district since the present system of returns was introduced was 25·26 per mille in 1892, and the highest was 44·91 per mille in 1899; the lowest death-rate returned was 24·03 in 1893 and the highest was 50·15 per mille in 1905.

PRINCIPAL DISEASES. FEVER.

The greatest mortality is caused by fever, but the death-rate is far less than in many other districts of Bengal, only once having been over 20 per mille (in 1894) and having been known to fall as low as 11·91 per mille in 1899. The following account of the types of fever observed in this district is based on a note kindly communicated by Captain A. Gwyther, I.M.S., when Civil Surgeon.

Malarial fevers are fairly prevalent in the district. The vast majority of cases which come under observation clinically are of a benign tertian character, either simple or double infections, which yield readily to quinine, though they are apt to relapse. One occasionally comes across cases of malign tertian and quartan which have been neglected, but these are extremely rare. There is no month in the year which is free from malaria, and the difference between months of maximum and minimum infection is small. Roughly, one may state that the mortality from malaria increases during the months of March and April, and then gradually rises till it reaches its maximum in the months of August and September, falling again in the months of October and November, with the subsidence of floods and fall

of surface water after the cessation of the rains. It may be noted too that periods of heavy rainfall resulting in local or general floods are those in which there is increased activity among mosquitoes and increased mortality from malaria. It is probable that the early commencement of the malaria season, *i.e.*, in April and May, before the floods have set in, is due to the fact that it is the breeding time of the anopheles mosquito. Malarial fever is more or less prevalent in all parts of the district, but is more marked in the north and north-west of the district and in the southern portion of the Siwān subdivision, areas which contain low-lying rice lands and are specially liable to inundation.

Plague. Plague appeared first in a village in the south-east corner of the district in January 1899. Owing to the prompt measures taken by the local authorities, the outbreak was confined to this one village and was stamped out by the end of March; but in September plague reappeared in a neighbouring village and gradually spread westward towards Chaprā, which became infected in March 1900. Since that time this scourge has never left the district, and in the 7 years 1900—1906 has caused over 128,000 deaths. The disease has followed the main lines of communications. The headquarters subdivision has suffered most severely, but many parts of the Siwān subdivision have been almost equally seriously affected. The Gopālganj subdivision has suffered least; owing to their inaccessibility the Gopālganj thāna and Barauli outpost shared with the other outposts in the north a comparative immunity until 1906, but Kuchai Kot, Bhore and Kateyā, which are further away from the highways of commerce, still continue to be free. The Ekmā and Mairwā outposts have also been attacked lightly, though they are both on the line of railway, probably because the villages are small and scattered, and the people evacuate their houses readily.

It is noticeable that in Sāran every alternate epidemic has been a severe one, the years of mild epidemics being 1900, 1902, 1904 and 1906, while severe epidemics have occurred in 1901, 1903 and 1905. The difference of severity may be seen in almost every month of the year, *e.g.*, in the month of March during these seven years, there have been respectively 764, 5,866, 2,938, 8,029, 4,314, 10,051 and 4,651 deaths. As in other districts, the disease comes and goes with the seasons with wonderful regularity, being most prevalent in the winter, and then practically disappearing or remaining dormant throughout the hot and rainy seasons, to recrudesce with the advent of the cold weather and attain its greatest virulence in the first three months of the year. The attitude of the people is generally one of apathy. They

have learnt from experience that the disease is spread by human intercourse and by rodents, and, as soon as rats begin to die, are ready to have their houses disinfected, to evacuate their villages, and to move out into temporary shelters. Inoculation has met with a very poor measure of success. A vigorous crusade against rats has been taken up recently.

Cholera. Cholera may be said to be endemic, and prevails most at the beginning and close of the rainy season, particularly if the rainfall is scanty, but severe outbreaks have also been recorded in the hot weather. The worst epidemics on record occurred in 1894 and 1900, when there was a mortality of 3·93 and 3·71 per mille respectively.

Small-pox. Small-pox never occurs in such a severe form as either fever or cholera, and the death-rate, since the present system of mortuary returns was introduced, has never reached even 0·50 per mille.

Dysentery and diarrhœa. Dysentery and diarrhœa, according to the returns, are far more common than in other districts of Bengal, Sāran being one of the four areas in Bengal conspicuous for the high death-rate reported under this head. There is good reason, however, to believe that these diseases are not so common as would appear from the returns, and that a number of cases are incorrectly ascribed by the *chaukīdārs* to them, for deaths caused by cholera are reported as due to dysentery if there is no vomiting. Children are specially liable to severe attacks of diarrhœa and dysentery in the rains, when these diseases are apt to be common amongst all classes and ages. The latter disease is often of a scorbutic type.

Goitre. Goitre is the most distinctive endemic disease of the district, especially in the north, about Gopālganj, Hathwā and Bhore. It attacks women very much more often than men, and the right lobe of the thyroid gland is more frequently enlarged than the left. As a general rule, the tumour is painless and causes little inconvenience, except by its size and by its pressing on the trachea and œsophagus, and thus interfering with the movements of respiration and deglutition. It is usually of slow growth, but sometimes increases rapidly, owing probably to the extreme vascularity of the gland. As far as this district is concerned, the disease is not associated with or dependent upon imperfect nutrition or cachexia, the majority of those who suffer from it being hale and strong. Most observers connect this singular disorder with the fact that the water is highly impregnated with lime, though it is difficult to determine what may be the rationale of the action of calcareous matter on the

system, so as to produce an abnormal development of the thyroid gland. All castes appear to be prone to this affection, which is not associated with cretinism, as is occasionally the case in Northern Bengal. It is not hereditary or limited by age, and may appear in infancy, childhood, adult, middle or advanced life, but it is most common between 20 and 40 years of age.

INFIRMITIES. Blindness. Blindness is more prevalent than in any other district in North Bihār, no less than 127 per 100,000 males and 100 per 100,000 females being returned as blind at the census of 1901. The glare and dust accompanying a hot dry climate appear to predispose to cataract, and in the 10 years ending in 1900 no less than 1,484 operations for cataract were performed. From a paper contributed to the Indian Medical Gazette by Captain R. H. Maddox, M.B., I.M.S., formerly Civil Surgeon of Sāran, reviewing the result of these operations, it appears that, out of the total number of operations, 845 were performed on females and only 639 on males—an unusual proportion. It is noticeable too that the great majority of the patients were over 45 years of age at the time of the operation, only 91 persons being between 30 and 40 years of age, 239 between 40 and 45 years of age, while no less than 1,154 were over 45 years old.

Deaf-mutism. Deaf-mutism is a common infirmity, 135 males and 67 females per 100,000 of either sex being returned as deaf-mutes at the census of 1901. The tracts in the north, where the Gandak divides Sāran from Champāran, are most affected, though far less so than the country on the other side of that river; the thānas along the banks of the Gandak in South Sāran are comparatively free from the affliction. The local name for persons so afflicted is *baudh*, which is possibly the survival of an old epithet of opprobrium, when Buddhist was a term of contempt. Cretins are also very common towards the north and west of the district.

Insanity and leprosy. Insanity is not very common, though the proportion of insane persons (16 per 100,000 males and 8 per 100,000 females) is higher than the average for North Bihār. Leprosy is also comparatively rare, lepers being seldom found outside the towns, where they assemble to beg.

VACCINATION. Vaccination is compulsory only in municipal areas and appears to be regarded with disfavour by the people. Hindus of every class are prejudiced against it, and seek safety from the ravages of small-pox by the worship of Sītalā, the goddess of small-pox. In 1906-07 the number of persons successfully vaccinated was 71,000, representing 30·5 per mille of the population, and protection was afforded to 375 per 1,000 infants under one year of age. The annual number of successful operations in the preceding

five years averaged only 24·6 per 1,000 of the population, a figure lower than in any other district in Bengal except Shāhābād. Apart from the general unpopularity of vaccination, there seems little doubt that the prevalence of plague has seriously interfered with the progress of the operations.

MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS.

There are altogether 12 general charitable dispensaries and hospitals in the district, situated at Bhore, Chaprā, Daraulī, Dighwārā, Gopālganj, Hathwā, Jāmo, Khajwā, Mahārājganj, Mashrak, Revelganj and Siwān. There is also a railway hospital intended for railway employés at Sonpur. The oldest medical institution in the district is the hospital at Chaprā, which was founded in 1856 by public subscription to commemorate a visit of the then Lieutenant-Governor and was further largely aided by a munificent donation from the late Bābu Banwāri Lāl Sāhu, a banker of the town. The proceeds of the endowment fund thus formed are now supplemented by a grant from the Chaprā municipality. The hospital building is of considerable size and affords in-door accommodation for 47 male and 26 female patients.

The largest medical institution in the district is the Victoria Hospital at Hathwā, constructed by the Mahārānī of Hathwā, and so called in memory of the late Queen-Empress. Originally intended to accommodate 50 patients, its popularity has become so great that it has been found necessary to provide accommodation for 72 in-patients, and also to construct an out-door dispensary for out-patients. This latter building, which is now under construction, is to be known as the Lady Fraser Dispensary after the wife of the present Lieutenant-Governor. The Siwān Dispensary, opened in 1872, has accommodation for 10 male and 10 female in-patients, and that at Jāmo for 4 male and 4 female in-patients. The remaining dispensaries afford out-door relief only.

CHAPTER V.

AGRICULTURE.

GENERAL CONDITIONS. SARAN is a fertile triangle of rich alluvial soil washed on two sides by the Gogrā, the Ganges and the Gandak. It possesses a so-called system of canals which are of little practical value, but its surface is pitted with innumerable wells, and it is cultivated by the most adroit agriculturists in the whole of Bihār. Unlike other districts which depend on one or perhaps two harvests, and stand or fall by them, the crops of Sāran are fairly evenly divided among the three great harvests of the year, so that it is practically impossible for it to lose the whole of its crops. This equality in the distribution of the crops is due largely to the conformation of the country. Besides the existing canalized riverbeds, Sāran is seamed with a line of swamps marking the beds of still older channels, and there are many other large swamps in isolated localities. All these grow vast stocks of rice, while the higher lands between them, and the riverain *diāras*, produce in the cold weather all the cereals of Upper India, many of them also yielding a crop of maize and millets in the autumn. Some parts are subject to floods caused either by excessive local rainfall or by the overflow of the three great rivers which surround the district. But the evil effects of floods are as nothing compared with those of drought, for apart from the loss of human life and of cattle, which are often insignificant, the destruction of a single crop by flood is usually compensated for by the resulting enrichment of the soil due to the deposit of silt.

For practical purposes, the land under cultivation may be divided into three classes,—the lowlands, the uplands, and the *diāra* lands. In the lowlands the main crop is rice, while the uplands are used for growing rice, opium, indigo, barley, wheat, sugarcane, pulses and oil-seeds. The lands along the banks of the rivers yield magnificent *rabi* or cold weather crops, but the *bhadoi* or autumn crops are liable to damage from the rivers overflowing their banks at harvest time, except in the tracts to the north and east which are protected by the Gandak embankment. The quality of the *diāra* lands varies very greatly. Some are of unsurpassed fertility and grow marvellous crops of wheat and

barley, peas and mustard. The soil is soft and friable, extending down only a few inches, a mere top dressing on the land. It requires little labour from the plough and is renewed by the fertilizing deposit of the river year after year. Other *diāras* again are sandy and worthless; and the good field of one year may be spoilt by a deposit of sand in the next.

RAINFALL. The natural drainage of the district is from north to south, and the line of drainage is crossed at right angles not only by the Bengal and North-Western Railway embankment, but also by numerous raised roads, in which the waterway allowed is sufficient in ordinary years, but insufficient when the rains are exceptionally heavy and the big rivers in high flood. The result is that the crops are peculiarly dependent on seasonable rainfall, for excessive moisture cannot be drained off easily, while the harm caused by defective rain is just as great. The very fact, moreover, that the crops are fairly evenly divided among the three great harvests of the year renders a well-distributed rainfall specially necessary, though, on the other hand, it frequently enables the district to show greater powers of resistance to the effects of partial drought.

Good rainfall, from the cultivator's point of view, is not rainfall which reaches or exceeds a certain annual total, but which is well distributed and seasonable. Showers throughout the cold weather are required for the *rabi* crops, but storms in February and March frequently damage the flowering poppy and ripening grain. Thereafter little rain is expected or required till the middle of May, when a good fall, in what is called the *chotā barsāt*, facilitates the preparation of the ground for the autumn crops. This should be followed by fairly heavy rain in June and July, when ample moisture is needed to bring on the seedlings and to permit of the transplantation of winter rice. Not much rain is required from the middle of August to the middle of September: indeed, excessive rain during this period may injure the ripening *bhadoi* crops. But the crucial period is during the last half of September and the *Hathiyā* asterism at the beginning of October; for drought at this time will not only ruin the winter rice, but will deprive the thirsty soil of the moisture necessary for the subsequent *rabi* crop.

IRRIGATION. Irrigation is resorted to wherever the means are present, either from wells, tanks, streams or *aharās*, *i.e.*, reservoirs formed by constructing embankments across the line of drainage. Nearly 200,000 acres, or 15 per cent. of the cropped area, are irrigated, and of every 100 acres irrigated, 72 are watered from wells, 18½ from tanks and reservoirs, 2½ from private channels, and the

remainder from other sources. The crops which mainly benefit are those of the *rabi* or spring harvest, and the greatest activity in providing and extending the means of artificial irrigation has been shown in the Siwān subdivision, owing to the exertions of officers of the Opium Department and the help afforded by the Hathwā Rāj.

Sāran canals.

In the north-east of the district there is a system of canals, known as the Sāran canals, which was introduced in order to counteract the injury caused by the Gandak embankment in depriving the land of its natural supply of moisture. The tendency of the Gandak in flood is to spill over its right bank southwards; and were it not for a massive embankment on this side, Sāran would be subject to devastating floods. While, however, it protects Sāran from floods, this embankment deprives it of any advantage it might have from employing the Gandak for irrigation. To meet this difficulty, it was agreed, at the instance of the indigo planters, between 1877 and 1880, to make five sluices in the Gandak embankment, and to connect them with four streams, rising near the embankment, and flowing through the district, viz., the Dāhā, Gandakī, Dhanai, and Gangrī, the object being to allow the water of the Gandak to pass freely down these channels, from which it might be lifted on to the fields. The estimated cost was Rs. 4,63,805; and Government agreed to advance this sum, provided that those concerned agreed to pay interest at the rate of 4½ per cent.:—the actual capital cost, direct and indirect, however, has amounted to more than 7 lakhs. A guarantee for Rs. 21,750 was given, and for some years was paid, the guarantors being chiefly indigo planters, who thus obtained an insurance against the loss of their crops from drought. The works were completed in 1881 and are said to have irrigated as much as 21,000 acres in 1884-85. The contract with the indigo planters terminated in 1890, and Government demanded a higher guarantee, which the planters refused to give. After that, various plans were tried, but none gave any satisfaction; and since January 1898 the sluices have remained closed. The canals were opened for a short time in the famine of 1897, but the Commissioner reported that they were of little use, and they were closed after irrigating only a little over 5,000 acres, because it was found that it was hopeless to expect any adequate return for any expenditure on them for irrigation purposes. There is a very strong feeling that the Sāran canals can and should be improved as a protection against famine in years of drought, and the question of making them more effective is under consideration.

At present, the canal system consists of a main feeder canal, 6½ miles long, and of the branch canals formed by the Dāhā,

Gandakī, Dhanai and Gangrī, which have an aggregate length of 12½ miles. They are fed from a *sotā* or side channel of the Gandak, and there are supply sluices to the main canal and the branch canals, as well as a regulator at the head of the Dāhā. The total area commanded is 64,000 acres, the culturable area commanded is 50,000 acres, and the irrigable area is 30,000 acres.

Irrigation from wells is very common, except in the tracts bordering on the Gandak river, where there is a prejudice against such irrigation on the ground that the soil is unsuitable for it. In the greater part of the district, however, well irrigation is feasible, owing to the fact that sub-soil water is found very near the surface. The contrivances for raising water are simple. One is a well with a leathern bucket (*mot*) hung on a rope, which passes over a pulley, and is attached to two bullocks, which run down an incline and pull up the bucket when filled. A second method is the erect pole (*lātha*) with a bamboo balanced on it, supporting a bucket at one end and a lump of mud at the other. According to a third method, the hollowed-out trunk of a tree is lowered into a stream, and the water raised by it is guided to where it is wanted. By another contrivance the water is raised by a reed basket scoop, which two men work by ropes attached to each end. Sometimes the water has to be raised by two and even three successive stages before the cultivator can irrigate his land. Wells.

Though irrigation has already been very fairly developed, there can be little doubt that there is room for its further extension. The Collector, Mr. Chapman, in his report on the famine of 1897 stated that "there is not a large rice-growing tract in the district that might not have been practically saved either by the excavation of a channel leading from the Gogrā or Gandak or by an embankment with a sluice to regulate the outflow of the rain water;" and for *rabi* tracts he strongly advocated the systematic construction of masonry wells, such as had already been undertaken through the offices of the Opium Department in the north of the district. The result would be, he said, to render the district immune from famine, for *rabi*, *chīna*, *maruā* and rice would be secured, and it would be only the *bhadoi* crops that would be liable to complete failure from insufficient rain. As matters stand at present, over 70 per cent. of the irrigated area in Sāran is irrigated from wells, and the crops benefited are mainly those of the *rabi* harvest. Extension of irrigation.

The soils are alluvial and vary from the hard clay found in the low swamps, which is known locally as *bāngar*, to the light sandy loams of the uplands, which are called *bhāth*. The former grows winter rice only, while from the latter an autumn rice SOILS.

crop is generally obtained, followed by a spring crop of opium, indigo and various cereals, pulses and oil-seeds. In the district, as a whole, these two soils are found in fairly regular proportions. *Bhāth* soils predominate in the northern tracts to the west of the Jharahī river; while *bāngar* soil is found in patches nearly all over the district. In this respect Sāran is peculiar, for in other districts of North Bihār *bāngar* is confined mainly to one tract. Without seasonable rainfall, and in the absence of means of irrigation, *bāngar* is unproductive, and the areas in which it prevails are the first to be affected and the last to recover in a season of drought. *Bhāth* soil, yielding as a rule two crops in the year, at the autumn and spring harvests, is much less dependent on the monsoon rainfall, owing to the greater variety of crops which it is capable of producing. A third class of soil universally recognized by the cultivators is that known as *goenr*, *i.e.*, the land immediately surrounding the village site. This is, as a rule, highly manured and is consequently reserved for the most paying crops, such as opium, wheat, vegetables and condiments, and, in the rainy season, maize and *china*.

The cultivators have a more minute soil classification based on composition. *Bhāth* is subdivided into *kāchh*, *baluā*, *matiyār* and *balsumbhi*, and *bāngar* into *bālu* and *matiyār*. This division is a difficult one for any but the expert cultivator to follow, for it is scarcely possible to differentiate between *bhāth baluā* and *bāngar bālu*, or *bhāth matiyār* and *bāngar matiyār*, except by the fact that one can be irrigated and the other cannot. *Matiyār* soil generally means a soil principally composed of clay; *bāngar* has a slight composition of sand ; *bhāth matiyār* rather more sand ; *bāngar bālu* and *bhāth baluā* more sand still ; *balsumbhi* is a sandy loam ; and *kāchh* is the very finest kind of alluvial soil containing sand, clay and other constituents in the right proportions for cold-weather crops. *Usar* and *rehār* lands are those on which the saline efflorescence known as *reh* comes to the surface; two inundations are said locally to be sufficient to convert *ūsar* soil into land capable of repaying cultivation.

The only classification recognized at the last settlement was that of *bhīth* and *dhanhar*, *i.e.*, high and low lands, *bhīth* being the same as the soil known locally as *bhāth*.

PRINCIPAL CROPS.

In Sāran, as elsewhere in Bihār, the crops are grouped in three great divisions—*aghani*, *bhadoi* and *rabi*. The *aghani* crops consist of winter rice, which is cut in the month of Aghan (November-December), and of sugarcane ; the *bhadoi* crops are the early or autumn crops reaped in the month of Bhādo (August-September), consisting of 60-days (*sāthi*) rice, *maruā*, Indian-corn,

indigo and various millets; while the *rabi* crop, which is so called because it is harvested in the spring (*rabi*), includes such cold-weather crops as wheat, barley, oats, pulses and poppy. At the last settlement (1893—1900) it was found that the *aghani* crops occupied 34 per cent., the *bhadoi* crops 41 per cent., and the *rabi* crops 62 per cent. of the net cropped area, of which only 37 per cent. was twice cropped and 15 per cent. was under irrigation. The most noticeable points with regard to those figures are the very large area under *rabi* crops, the large area twice-cropped, and the comparatively high percentage of the net cropped area which is irrigated. The area under *aghani* crops is proportionally very much less than in any other of the North Gangetic districts of the Patna Division, while the area under *rabi* crops is greater than in any of those districts.

The Gopālganj subdivision shows the largest percentage under *bhadoi* crops and the smallest under *aghani;* in Siwān and the headquarters subdivision the percentages of *bhadoi* and *aghani* differ very little from the general percentages for the district. In Siwān *rabi* occupies only 49 per cent. of the net cropped area, as against 72 per cent. in the headquarters subdivision; while Gopālganj, with 63 per cent., is only slightly above the district average. The predominance of the *rabi* crop is marked throughout. In the three thānas of the Siwān subdivision only does the proportion fall below 50 per cent., while in the Chaprā thāna it rises to 76 per cent., and in Sonpur to as much as 93 per cent.

FOOD-CROPS. According to the statistics furnished by the last cadastral survey, food-crops are grown on 85 per cent. of the cultivated area. It is curious to notice how the proportion of food-crops is least in the north and steadily increases as we go south. Thus, the Gopālganj subdivision has 83 per cent. of its total cropped area under food-crops, Siwān 84 and the headquarters subdivision 87 per cent. The most remarkable figures are those of Sonpur thāna, where no less than 94 per cent. of the cultivated area is under food-crops and only 6 per cent. under non-food-crops. It is generally recognized that pressure of population causes an increase in the cultivation of food-crops at the expense of the area under non-food-crops; and though the census figures show that Chaprā, Mānjhi and Siwān thānas have more persons to the square mile than Sonpur, it must be remembered that Sonpur is a purely agricultural tract, containing no village which could be called a town, and having no industry or manufacture on which to fall back. The figures here given, coupled with the fact that little more than 9 per cent. of the area of Sonpur is waste land available for cultivation, serve to show that the

pressure of the population on the soil has reached its extreme limits.

Rice.

The most important of the food-crops is rice, which covers an area of 688 square miles or 34 per cent. of the net cropped area. One-sixth of it is *bhadoi* rice harvested in the autumn, and the remaining five-sixths is *aghani* or winter rice. The latter is sown broadcast after the commencement of the rains in June or July on lands selected for seed nurseries, which have previously been ploughed three or four times. After four or six weeks, when the young plants are about a foot high, they are generally transplanted; each plant is pulled out from the land, which is soft with standing water, and planted again in rows in flooded fields, in which the soil has been puddled. The rice is then left to mature, with the aid of water, till towards the end of September. The water is then drained off and the fields are allowed to dry for 15 days, and at the end of that time they are again flooded. It is this practice, known as *nigār*, which makes the rainfall, or failing that, irrigation essential to a successful harvest. These late rains (the *Hathiyā*) are the most important in the year, for not only are they required to bring the winter crops to maturity, but also to provide moisture for the sowing of the *rabi* crops. Should no rain fall at this period, or if water cannot be procured from artificial sources, the plants will wither and become only fit for fodder; but if seasonable showers fall or the crops are watered from *aharās*, *pains* or canals, the rice comes to maturity in November or December, and is then reaped.

Aghani rice.

One special feature of rice cultivation in Sāran may be mentioned here, viz., the growth in low marshy tracts of long-stemmed rice which rises with the flood-level. As soon as the low ground has nearly dried up in February, it is ploughed, and the seed is sown broadcast. When the regular rains begin, the plant gradually rises with the water, often attaining a height of 20 feet, and being rarely, if ever, drowned by inundation.

Bhadoi rice.

Bhadoi rice is generally sown broadcast on high land in June or July and not transplanted; it is regarded as a 60-days crop (called *sāthi* from *sāth*, sixty) and is generally harvested in August and September. It is grown most extensively in the Gopālganj subdivision, where it accounts for one quarter of the rice-cropped area. This fact would be of considerable importance in a famine caused by the failure of the *aghani* harvest, for the *bhadoi* rice is reaped early in September, and may be a first rate crop, even if there is a failure of the *Hathiyā* rains, on which the *aghani* rice depends; further, with favourable cold-weather showers, a good *rabi* crop can be secured from the land on which

bhadoi rice has been grown. On the other hand, *rabi* crops, if grown at all on *aghani* land, are always of inconsiderable value, and do little to help the ryot to tide over a year of distress following a short *aghani* outturn.

Barley and maize. Next in importance are barley and maize, grown on 20 and 16·6 per cent. respectively of the net cropped area. With rice, they form the staple food of the district, and it is partly to the fact that the people are not dependent on rice only that the comparative immunity of Sāran from famine is due.

Minor food-grains. Various minor food-grains collectively account for 15·7 per cent. of the net cropped area. Among these *khesāri* (Lathyrus sativus) occupies an important place. It is a cheap pulse, which is largely sown as a catch-crop on winter rice lands and cut in February and March. It is mainly the poor man's food, and is not eaten by those who can afford anything better. Among others crops classed under this head are *chīna* (Panicum miliaceum), peas, oats, *masurī* (Lens esculenta), *sāwān* (Panicum frumentaceum), *kauni* (Setaria italica), *urid* (Phaseolus mungo), *mūng* (Phaseolus radiatus), and *janerā* (Sorghum vulgare. *Chīna* and *kauni* are husked, boiled and eaten like rice ; *khesārī*, peas and *janerā* are ground into flour before consumption. The produce of all these crops enter largely into the dietary of the poorer classes ; except when specially prepared, they are not eaten by the well-to-do. *Chīna*, a millet often sown with rice, is valuable in a year of famine, as it is ready for cutting about 6 weeks after it is sown ; but the soil is said to deteriorate after even one crop. With the exception of oats, these crops are seldom grown singly, peas and *musurī* being generally sown with barley, *sāwān* and *kauni* with maize, *mūng* with *janerā*, *urid* with *kodo*, and so on. They cover the largest proportion of the net cropped area in Siwān and Daraulī, which are also the thānas in which *aghani* rice is most important ; and the extent to which *khesāri* is sown on winter rice lands doubtless accounts for the large area (8·4 per cent. of the net cropped area) shown as under miscellaneous food-crops.

Kodo. *Kodo* (Paspalum scrobiculatum) occupies 8·36 per cent. of the net cropped area and is most widely grown in the Gopālganj subdivision and in the Sonpur thāna. It is husked and eaten like rice, and largely takes its place among the poorer classes at certain seasons of the year.

Wheat. Wheat is raised on 6 per cent. of the net cropped area and is the most valuable of all the *rabi* food-crops. It requires special lands and high cultivation, and is usually raised for sale rather than for home consumption, as the ordinary ryot cannot

afford to eat it. It is most important in Sonpur, where it covers over 18 per cent. of the net cropped area, and in Parsā, where it accounts for nearly 10 per cent. At the other end of the scale is Daraulī, where only a little over 1 per cent. is under this crop.

Arhar. *Arhar* (Cajanus indicus) comes next in order of importance, occupying 5 per cent. of the net cropped area. It is a hardy deep-rooted crop, which can withstand drought, and is therefore most valuable in a year of short rainfall; every observer during the famine of 1897 was struck with the way in which *arhar* flourished while other crops were parched and dying. It is sown in June, usually interspersed with maize, and reaped in April. It requires no irrigation, but is benefited by cold-weather showers. When cut, the pods are threshed and the peas are ground into flour and eaten as *dāl*, the pods themselves being used as fodder for cattle, while the stalks are valuable as fuel. It is extensively grown in all thānas except Parsā and Sonpur, where the more valuable wheat crop takes its place.

Gram. Gram is an important crop in the southern part of the district, especially in thānas Sonpur and Chaprā. It is largely used as fodder for horses, but is also eaten by human beings in the form of *sattu*, and is used as *dāl* and flour in preparing other food.

Maruā. *Maruā* (Eleusine coracana), covering 3 per cent. of the cropped area, is an unimportant crop, except in the Siwān subdivision and Mānjhi thāna. It is transplanted like rice, but the soil requires less preparation. It is harvested in September, and takes little out of the soil, on which a *rabi* crop is invariably grown subsequently. *Maruā* is ground into flour and eaten in the form of cakes. It is the grain generally given to labourers, when they are paid in kind instead of in cash.

Miscellaneous food-crops. Miscellaneous food-crops account for 2·9 per cent. of the net cropped area, the most important being yams (*aluā*) and potatoes. They are most extensively grown in the headquarters subdivision, where they account for over 4 per cent. of the net cropped arrea. Potatoes cover altogether 6,000 acres, of which 5,000 acres are in the headquarters subdivision. They are used as vegetables by the rich, and hence are grown, as a rule, only in the neighbourhood of large markets.

NON-FOOD-CROPS. Among the non-food-crops oil-seeds occupy the most important position, being grown on 7·2 per cent. of the net cropped area. The most important of the oil-seeds is linseed with nearly 80,000 acres, mustard following it with only 8,650 acres. They are most extensively grown in thānas Chaprā, Mānjhi and Parsā, and in the Gopālganj subdivision.

Sugarcane is a crop which has come into prominence during the last few years, its cultivation having been steadily extended in the greater part of the district. When the settlement statistics were obtained, it was grown on 36,000 acres or 2·8 per cent. of the net cropped area, being most important in the Siwān subdivision, especially in the Daraulī thāna where it covered over 9 per cent. of the net cropped area, and where nearly one-third of the sugarcane of the district was produced. Since that time the high prices obtained for sugar have led to an increase in production generally, and sugarcane has been largely substituted for indigo. The result is that the area devoted to the crop has increased to 44,700 acres or 3·5 per cent. of the net cropped area. In other words, it now covers an area nearly equal to that formerly covered by indigo, which has lost much of its importance. **Sugarcane.**

At the time of the settlement operations, 45,500 acres, or 3·5 per cent. of the net cropped area, were under indigo; but the area has decreased very much since that time, owing to the competition of artificial dye. Several factories have been closed, and the area sown has been curtailed in many others; much of the abandoned land has been given back or sold to ryots for ordinary cultivation of food-crops, and a good deal has been laid down by the factories themselves in sugarcane and oil-seeds, tobacco and other special crops. The result is that the area has now (1907) shrunk to 11,200 acres or less than a fourth of the area sown 10 years ago. The greater portion of this area lies in the Gopālganj subdivision, and nearly all the remainder in the Siwān subdivision. Indigo cultivation in the headquarters subdivision is now comparatively rare. **Indigo.**

Poppy is grown most extensively in the Gopālganj and Siwān subdivisions, but it is also an important crop in all the thānas of the headquarters subdivision except Sonpur. There is, however, a marked tendency for the area under poppy to contract. It is a very delicate crop and liable to many vicissitudes; and notwithstanding the advantages of the system of advances, ryots frequently prefer to grow other special crops, such as potatoes. At the time of the cadastral survey altogether 40,000 acres were under poppy, but the area has now shrunk to 30,300 acres. Here, as elsewhere, the production of opium is a Government monopoly, and is under the control of the Opium Department. **Poppy.**

Of the crops shown under the head of fibres, the most important is cotton, which now covers over 14,400 acres, the cultivation having been extended to some extent since the decrease of the area under indigo, especially in the headquarters subdivision. It is almost invariably grown as a mixed crop with *arhar*. **Fibres.**

The local staple is very poor, but Madras cotton has been introduced by the Arwā factory. Experiments in the cultivation and manufacture of rhea fibre have been made at the Gopālpur factory. Jute and flax are grown on an insignificant area.

Other non-food-crops.

The area under other non-food-crops is also insignificant. Thatching grass (*kharhaul*) is grown mainly in the Gopālganj subdivision and Mashrak thāna, the remainder of the district being too closely cultivated to leave much room for it. Under dyes other than indigo comes safflower (*kusum*), which is grown chiefly on *diāras* as a mixed crop with barley and wheat. Formerly it was grown on a much larger scale, but of late it has become unimportant, as the cheaper foreign chemical dyes have replaced it. Tobacco, though an important and valuable crop in Muzaffarpur and other neighbouring districts, occupies only an insignificant position in Sāran. *Pān* or betel leaf is grown generally on high land situated near wells and tanks; the villages of Chirānd, Gultenganj and Dighwārā are the chief centres of *pān* cultivation, but it is also grown on a small scale in many other villages between Chirānd and Sonpur.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS.

In the preceding account the statistics obtained at the last settlement have been given, but in some cases the cropped area has been extended or reduced considerably. The following table is therefore given to show the normal acreage of each crop and its percentage on the normal net cropped area :—

Name of crop.	Normal acreage.	Percentage on normal net cropped area.	Name of crop.	Normal acreage.	Percentage on normal net cropped area.
Winter rice ...	373,800	27	Summer rice ...	600	...
Sugarcane	36,500	3	Wheat	77,500	6
			Barley	260,400	19
Total *aghani* crops	410,300	30	Gram	58,700	4
Autumn rice ...	66 400	5	Other *rabi* cereals and pulses ...	366,400	26
Jowār	5,000	...			
Bājra	2,800	...	Other *rabi* food-crops	37,600	3
Maruā	40,300	3	Linseed	79,500	6
Indian corn ...	213,300	15	Rape and mustard...	8,700	1
			Til (*rabi*)	200	...
Other *bhadoi* cereals and pulses ...	45,000	3	Other oil-seeds ...	3,500	...
			Tobacco	500	...
Other *bhadoi* food-crops	21,300	2	Opium	40,200	3
Early cotton ...	500	...	Late cotton ...	14,300	1
Indigo	8,000	1			
Til (*bhadoi*) ...	400	...	Other *rabi* non-food-crops ...	7,600	...
Other *bhadoi* non-food-crops ...	18,200	1	Total *rabi* crops ...	955,700	69
			Orchards and garden produce	73,200	5
Total *bhadoi* crops	421,200	30	Twice cropped area	477,500	34

According to the returns for 1906-07, the total area under different crops was 2,762 square miles, of which 698 square miles were twice cropped, the net cropped area being thus 2,064 square miles. The area not available for cultivation was returned at 307 square miles, while the area of cultivable waste (excluding 126 square miles classed as current fallow) was only 178 square miles or 6·6 per cent. of the entire area of the district.

EXTENSION OF CULTIVATION.

Even in the days of Muhammadan rule Sāran was extensively and closely cultivated owing to its favourable situation and rich soil; and in 1793 we find the Collector describing it as being "generally in a state of high cultivation." All the available evidence tends to show that under British rule the agricultural advance in this district has been more in the direction of improvement than of extension of cultivation. At first sight, it is true, the percentage of uncultivated land (22·75 per cent.) appears large, and, considering the pressure on the soil, it seems strange that the proportion should be greater than in Muzaffarpur or Darbhangā. This, however, does not represent a reserve available for cultivation, but is due to the large area of *diāra* land, the greater part of which consists of sand and water, and can never be cultivable under any circumstances. If this area be deducted, as well as that covered by municipal towns, the cultivated area is just under 80 per cent. There are, as a matter of fact, only 313 square miles available for the expansion of cultivation, *i.e.*, a little over 12 per cent. of the whole district; and of this more than one-third is covered with mango groves, while most of the rest is absolutely necessary for pasturage for the cattle. Adding current fallow to the cultivated area, we find that only 1·14 per cent. of the cultivated area is given rest in this district, little more than one acre in every hundred brought under the plough being left untilled even for a single year.*

Improvement of methods.

It is manifest that so large a population, which is mainly agricultural, could not be supported unless the land was unusually fertile and highly cultivated; and it is not surprising, therefore, to find that nearly the whole of its area is at present under the plough, or to learn that Sāran has always, from the earliest times of which record exists, been remarkable for its high state of agriculture. Even the most discontented cultivator never so much as hints that the soil is becoming worked out, or that the annual produce is becoming smaller year by year, a result which is probably due very largely to the systematic way in which the land is manured; though it is also accounted for, in the case of lowlands, by the periodical floods which leave

* The figures quoted in this paragraph are those given in the Settlement Report.

behind a rich alluvial deposit. The cultivators of Sāran are, in fact, among the most advanced agriculturists in the Province.

There is an experimental farm at Srīpur, where useful work is being conducted in connection with the cultivation of maize, oats and *jowār*; experiments in cattle breeding are also carried on.

Loans Acts.

Little use has been made of the provisions of the Land Improvement and Agriculturists Loans Acts, the only considerable advances made being in the famine year of 1897, when over 2 lakhs were lent under the Agriculturists Loans Act. It has not been the policy of Government to interfere ordinarily between the ryot and his *mahājan*, but merely to step in when adverse agricultural conditions make money unusually dear and render it advisable to help the ryot to secure money promptly and at low interest. The principle of security generally adopted is for a number of ryots in one village to bind themselves jointly and severally to repay the sum advanced to each person who signs the agreement. Advances under the Land Improvement Loans Act are not very popular, and yet much good might be done if these advances were judiciously but liberally given in those parts of the district where the construction of wells is necessary for agricultural operations. Recently some attempts have been made to start agricultural banks, and a few infant banks have begun to work with a small capital. But in this district, it is reported, the professional money-lender is not to be dreaded. The money-lenders are well-to-do cultivators and small zamīndārs; and most of the land which changes hands is taken by them and not by the *baniyās*, and thus does not go out of the possession of the agricultural and landholding classes.

Fruits and vegetables.

The most distinctive fruit of Sāran is the mango. Mango groves cover no less than 71,000 acres, and are particularly numerous in the Mānjhi thāna, probably because the whole area was until recent years owned by two influential families, those of Mānjhi and Chainpur, both of which granted large areas rent-free to their family priests and retainers, who used to plant with trees a portion of the area which they could not themselves bring under cultivation. At present, the tendency is for the cultivators, in their anxiety to find land for their crops, to cut down all groves that are not immediately profitable, except when religious considerations debar them from doing so. Among other fruits may be mentioned the *lichī* (Nephelium litchi), custard-apple, jack-fruit, lemon, plantain, *bel* (Aegle Marmelos), pomegranate and guava. The mango, *lichī* and *bel* fruits ripen in the hot weather, the jack-fruit in the rains, the plantain and

guava all the year round. Peaches, grapes and pine-apples are also found in good gardens.

Among vegetables the most important are potatoes and yams, both of which are grown extensively. The former are cultivated on no less than 6,000 acres, while yams (*aluā*) are an important crop used largely for food by the poorer classes. A large number of other vegetables are raised in garden plots for household use and for sale, such as the egg plant or *baigun* (Solanum melongena), ground-nut, garlic, pumpkins, gourds, radishes, melons, onions and carrots. Chillies are cultivated on a large scale and, to a less extent, aniseed and coriander.

The cattle are generally poor in quality, the best coming from Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā and from the United Provinces. Owing to the appropriation of all available land for crops, pasturage is insufficient, but in the cold weather a large number of cattle are sent to Champāran to graze. Milch buffaloes and cart bullocks are the best tended and fed; plough bullocks and cows are not infrequently neglected and under-fed. Fortunately, the nature of the soil and the system of shallow ploughing, which is all that is generally required, do not necessitate the use of other than small bullocks. The Hathwā Rāj has established a cattle-breeding farm at Srīpur in the north-west of the district, and it is hoped gradually to improve the local breeds by the systematic selection of good bull calves to be brought up in the farm and subsequently turned loose among the village herds. More is hoped from this system than from crossing local cows with up-country and other foreign bulls. CATTLE.

There is considerable difficulty about pasturage, as no large grazing grounds are left, and proper stall-feeding is costly. *Usar* lands, on which a salt deposit called *reh* forms, and which will grow nothing but very inferior grass, are generally used for grazing and, in fact, afford the only real pasturage in the district, except such scanty pickings as the cattle may find in roadsides, field boundaries or groves of trees. In September, October and November there is abundance of food in maize stalks and *kodo* straw, mixed with green *bājra* and grass chopped up; in December and January rice straw is added. In February, fodder is supplied by *latri*, in March the straw of the *rabi* crop comes in, and in April wheat chaff is stored up for use. May, June and July are the months in which it is most difficult to feed the cattle, but in August *bājra* is again procurable.

Most of the horses and ponies in this district come from Ballia and elsewhere in the United Provinces, but a few are bred in Sāran both for domestic use and also for sale at fairs. The

principal fairs are the Sonpur fair, the Godnā fair held at Revelganj in November, the Silhauri and Mehnār fairs in February, and the Thāwe fair in March. Of these fairs by far the most important is that held at Sonpur, which is, in fact, one of the largest cattle and horse fairs in India. It is held on the full moon of November every year and lasts about a fortnight; a fuller description of this fair will be found in Chapter XV. A cattle show is also held annually at Srīpur. Veterinary relief is afforded at a veterinary dispensary at Larpur under the management of the Hathwā Rāj.

CHAPTER VI.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

LIABILITY TO FAMINE.

It has been explained in the previous chapter that Sāran is not dependent on any one crop, the area under cultivation being fairly evenly divided among the three great harvests of the year. No one harvest has such a predominance as to dwarf the others, and past experience has shown that it requires the failure of two of the three harvests of the year to cause famine. In this respect, Sāran is different from other districts of Bihār, where the cultivators are mainly dependent on winter rice; and there is also this marked distinction that in Sāran the latter crop is not confined to any one tract as it is elsewhere, but is found in scattered portions throughout the district. Still, nearly one-fifth of the district is, to a large extent, dependent for its prosperity on the *aghani* harvest, and is liable to suffer severely in a year of drought. Every thāna, except Sonpur, contains a considerable proportion of this area, and its scattered nature makes famine administration in Sāran an anxious and difficult task. One of the most striking features of the district is the presence, in nearly all parts of it, of large low-lying tracts of land in which only *aghani* rice can be grown. If the *aghani* crop is a failure, such tracts are bound to suffer severely, even although the high lands by which they are surrounded may have secured a good *bhadoi* and *rabi* harvest. Thus, in the famine of 1897, though general distress was averted from Sāran, the stress in certain parts of the district was greater than elsewhere. The rice crop was the greatest failure; and it was in the tracts where rice was the only or the principal crop that serious distress occurred.

In five out of the ten thānas, viz., in Mīrganj, Gopālganj, Mashrak, Parsā and Sonpur, *bhadoi* occupies over 40 per cent. and *rabi* over 55 per cent. of the net cropped area; and of these thānas it may be safely said that they are, as a whole, practically secure from famine, unless a failure of the rains, resulting in disaster to the *bhadoi* and *aghani* crops, is followed by a failure of the *rabi*. The Siwān subdivision, on the other hand, with a comparatively large area under *aghani* crops and a small area under *rabi*, is liable to suffer first in case of a failure of the

rains. At the same time, famine could never be really severe for more than a few months, unless the *rabi* crops failed also. In the remaining thānas, Mānjhi and Chaprā, the area under *bhadoi* and *aghani* crops is equally distributed, while the percentage under *rabi* is considerably above the district average. In these thānas, too, severe and widespread famine is said to be an impossibility, unless there is a failure of all the harvests of the year.

Taking the district as a whole, it is less dependent on the winter rice crop than any other district in North Bihār, though there are tracts in various parts in which winter rice is predominant. In these limited areas the failure of that crop is followed by severe distress; but in Sāran, as a whole, the rice is the least important crop of all and the *rabi* the most important. Thus, though a failure of the winter rice does not plunge the district, as a whole, into such dire distress as Muzaffarpur, Champāran or Darbhangā, large tracts must always be seriously affected by a failure of the monsoon; and its dense population, almost entirely dependent on agriculture, the indebtedness of a large part of the agricultural class, and the small average size of holdings must always make it a source of anxiety in any year of short harvests and high prices.

FAMINES. Since Sāran came under British rule there have been five severe famines, viz., in 1770, 1783, 1866, 1874 and 1897, the history of which is an interesting study of the development of the administration of famine relief.

Famine of 1770. There are few details regarding the course of the terrible famine of 1770 in Sāran. It appears from the record left by Muhammad Reza Khān and from letters of Mr. Thomas Rumbold, Chief of Patna, that there were heavy floods in August 1768 in several parts of Bihār, followed by intense and continued drought, relieved only by showers during the rainy season of 1769. In 1770 terrible and widespread famine ensued, and in April 1770 we find Mr. Alexander, the Supervisor of Bihār, reporting that the depopulation in the interior was more rapid than could be imagined by any one who had not witnessed it: while in June 1770 the Hon. John Cartier, the President and Governor, informed the gentlemen of the Select Committee that the mortality among the people in the Bihār Province had already amounted to nearly two hundred thousand. Practically the only step taken to relieve the general distress was a composition with the farmers, by which the demand was proportioned to their actual ability to pay; two-thirds of the actual crops being taken, and no demand made from those who had nothing. The result

was that collections, though poor, were much better than was anticipated, owing to the high price at which grain was sold. On the recommendation of Mr. Rumbold, a sum of one lakh was remitted from the revenue in *Sarkār* Sāran, and Rs. 1,50,250 in *Sarkār* Champāran at the end of 1769; besides a deduction from the demand to the extent of Rs. 1,25,000, which had already been sanctioned at the beginning of that year.

Famine of 1783.

There is some interesting correspondence showing the action taken by the Collector of Sāran in 1783 to prohibit exportation, and to force the dealers to sell to any person who wanted grain, and to break down monopolies. He proposed, among other things, that all grain which any one should attempt to export, contrary to the meaning of the prohibition, should be confiscated and deposited in a safe place by the Collector, to be delivered by him gratis to the poor. He justified these extraordinary proposals on the grounds that the conduct of the monopolists during the famine of 1770 tended in a great degree to bring on and afterwards to continue that calamity. We find, however, that on the 19th October 1783, Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Shore (Lord Teignmouth) wrote from Patna, to which place he seems to have been specially deputed, that he had directed the Collectors of Sāran and Tirhut to remove every embargo on the free exportation of grain from their districts, holding that the greatest distress required relief first, and that merchants would dispose of their grain wherever they could do so to the best advantage; and that they would only continue to export it as long as the scarcity was greater than within their district. The Council fully approved the measures taken by Mr. Shore.

Famine of 1866.

The famine of 1866 was caused by bad harvests in three successive years and by a general rise in the price of food, unaccompanied by any advance in wages. The autumn crops of 1864 had partially failed, the *rabi* crops of 1865 had been severely injured by hail; and this was followed by a failure of both the maize and rice crops, the outturn of the latter being only one-third of the average. Much, therefore, depended on the winter crops, the sowing of which had been retarded by want of rain and want of seed; but the hopes founded on them were frustrated by hail-storms which ravaged the district from its extreme north-western corner to its eastern limit, where it is bounded by the Gandak. The tract affected was about 35 miles long by 8 miles broad; and so complete was the destruction that it was said that almost every blade of corn and green leaf had been destroyed. The effect of this storm was to involve in ruin all cultivators within its reach and to deprive the labouring class of

employment. They had, in fact, no means of support till the next sowing season, three or four months distant. In the meantime, Rs. 3,000 were sent to some indigo planters, in localities where the distress was keenest, to afford some relief by road-making. Work was also started at Siwān; and some hundreds were thus supported till April, when funds ran short and the the works were stopped.

No other relief measures were adopted till June, when the distribution of gratuitous relief was started at 11 centres. Road works were recommenced in July, and 1,800 persons were thus employed in July, August and September; but the relief came too late. The Collector had reported, towards the end of 1865, that everything depended on the *rabi* crops; and that if these failed, as they did, there would be frightful distress. In the words of Mr. Cockerell—" A clear case for extensive relief measures had arisen; yet no provision for affording relief on a scale at all commensurate with the need of the people was attempted, till late in the month of June; and consequently, a vast number of those who came to the relief centres to obtain food, were already in a moribund state, to whom the first meal gave the death blow." Altogether, 8,175 persons are said to have died from starvation and disease; and in no month did the daily average number of persons receiving relief of one kind or another exceed 7,000.

Famine of 1874. The famine of 1874 was due to the deficient and abnormally distributed rainfall of 1873, aggravated by unfavourable weather and short crops in the preceding year. In 1872 the rainfall in the headquarters subdivision was 9 inches under the normal quantity, and though its happy distribution mitigated greatly the evil effects of such an unusual absence of moisture, it could not wholly avert them. In the Siwān subdivision, on the other hand, the rainfall in 1872, though up to the average, was badly distributed. The general effect was that for the district, as a whole, the autumn crop yielded fairly; the rice crop was five-eighths of an average crop, and the winter crop of 1873 was about one-eighth short of an average. Thus the year 1873-74 was ushered in by a year which was itself unseasonable, and prices during the earlier months of 1873 were considerably above the rates which usually prevail at that period. In 1873, although the total rainfall was only four or five inches below the average of the ten preceding years, its distribution was phenomenally abnormal. There was no rain in May, and the monsoon rains did not break till late in June. On the other hand, out of the total rainfall of 33·83 inches during the whole year over 26

inches fell in July and August. In September, a month in which rice demands copious moisture, only one inch of rain fell, and the last three months of the year were absolutely rainless.

The result was that the crops were more or less deficient in all parts of the district, except along the banks of the Gogrā. The maize yielded hardly three-eighths of an ordinary crop; and the rice crop failed almost entirely. In the Baraulī outpost and Basantpur thāna, bordering the Gandak, the deficiency was greatest; and to the west of Hathwā, where the main crop was rice, and the harvests had been deficient for three successive years, severe distress was inevitable. By the middle of January rice was selling at 10 and 11 seers a rupee, and relief works were opened. As early as the 10th February, there were 70,000 persons employed on relief works, many of whom were women and persons who do not ordinarily resort to this kind of labour. By the beginning of June the average daily number of persons on relief works rose to 226,000; but it more nearly resembled a system of gratuitous relief without its stigma, as most were on daily wages, only a few doing piece-work, which was refused by the higher castes, such as Brāhmans and Rājputs. In all, 62 relief circles had been opened, the agency of indigo planters being resorted to wherever possible. Advances of cash and food grains were also actively pushed on. Orders had been issued in May that all payments should be made in grain, but by the 1st June only 30,000 maunds out of nearly 520,000 maunds of Government grain had been consumed; and of the rice imported by the Hathwā Rāj, whose estates lay in the most distressed parts, only 11,000 out of 124,000 maunds had been used.

During the fortnight ending the 17th June the average daily number employed on works advanced to 229,885; but the number began to fall as soon as the rains began, and the *bhadoi* crop, which was a good one on the whole, though damaged by inundations and excessive rainfall in some parts, greatly relieved the pressure. But in September there was a very high flood, the Ganges rising 11 inches above the level of the flood of 1871, which inundated Chaprā. Nearly one-sixth of the whole district was submerged, more or less, especially the thānas of Dighwārā, Chaprā and Parsā. During the fortnight ending the 11th September, the average daily number on relief works was 121,719, the number on charitable relief 60,873. From the 11th to the 24th September there was a serious want of rain, which gave rise to gloomy anticipations regarding the outturn

of the winter crops. But the fall of rain, varying from 4 to 18 inches, during the following fortnight saved the rice; and relief operations were soon afterwards brought to an end. The amount of relief given by the State was very great. During the year 610 tons of grain were distributed, 6,410 tons sold for cash, 17,894 tons advanced on loan, and 11,487 tons paid as wages, or in all 1,019,228 maunds. Besides this, Rs. 2,92,663 were distributed in cash, Rs. 6,41,477 advanced on loan, and Rs. 15,06,412 paid as wages. The pendulum had swung forward with a vengeance, and although no lives were lost by starvation as in 1866, the result was attained at an enormous and unnecessary cost. It is easy to be wise after the event, but it is generally admitted that the measures taken erred on the side of extravagance and led to demoralization.

Famine of 1897.

The famine of 1897 was due to deficient and ill-distributed rainfall. The rain was short in September 1895, and from the 1st October 1895 to the 30th June 1896 only 2·71 inches fell. In 1896 the rains commenced late in June, and from the first were insufficient, the monsoon current from the east seeming to be exhausted before it reached Sāran; and two long periods of drought occurred in August and September. In June the fall was only 2·68 inches as against a normal fall of 6·42 inches, in July the fall was $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches short, and in August the deficiency was an inch and a half; but worse was to come, for in September only 1·28 inches fell against an average of 7·45 inches, and none fell after the middle of that month or in October. Thus, the three asterisms of the *Hathiyā*, *Chitrā* and *Siwāti*, which are the most important in the whole agricultural year, passed without a drop of rain in this district. The deficiency was equivalent to 47·85 per cent. of the normal fall, the total rainfall from the 1st April to the 1st November being only 22·32 inches, in place of a normal fall of 42·80 inches. The district average for the whole of the year 1897 was 24·03 inches, the lowest on record. The result was that the *bhadoi* was only a 6-anna crop, the *aghani* rice $1\frac{1}{4}$ annas, and the *rabi*, which was much helped by the winter rains, $12\frac{3}{4}$ annas. The failure of the winter rice was the greatest, and following the serious failure of the *bhadoi* crop, which is very important in Sāran, the position was critical. Prices also, which had been for some years high, notwithstanding good harvests, rose very high in October 1896; and the general distress and famine throughout Northern and Central India heightened the anxiety.

The first symptoms of real distress did not appear till December and January, although test relief works were opened in the

north-west and west of the Gopālganj subdivision at the end of November and beginning of December. Experience soon proved, however, that relief works were an unsatisfactory test. An unprecedented number of males had emigrated, the result being that in numerous cases houses had been left with the women and children in charge of a single man. The people, therefore, found themselves unable to resort to relief works, unless they were close to their houses. It was also obvious that, wherever relief works were opened under the provisions of the Famine Code, the people of neighbouring villages would swarm to them whether in actual distress or not. The Collector accordingly came to the conclusion that it was necessary to organize quickly a system of gratuitous relief, and to make relief work as onerous as possible. The largest number of relief works open at any time was 52; and the largest number of persons actually employed on relief works at any time was 23,711 in the month of May 1897, representing a percentage of 1·05 of the population of the affected area. Gratuitous relief was found necessary at an early date for the reasons already stated, and was promptly organized. At the same time, the number relieved was at no time excessive, and was never more than 60,605. Owing to very heavy rain causing floods in June, which destroyed some of the *bhadoi* crop, July was perhaps the worst month that the people of Sāran had to go through.

Most of the relief was given at centres in the shape of grain doles; and the proportion relieved in poor-houses and kitchens was insignificant till the end of July, when extensive kitchen relief was first organized for the benefit of the children, the bulk of whom were of the lowest class, living from hand to mouth. The result of the efforts made by the authorities was that not a single death from starvation was authenticated, and it was not till August that the death-rate began to exceed the normal, owing to malaria in an intensified form acting on a population reduced by insufficient food.

The following account of the course of the famine is quoted from the report of the Commissioner, Sir James Bourdillon, K.C.S.I., who had himself been Collector of Sāran. "The expected severity of the distress was greatly mitigated by three facts: in the first place, the district in the best of years never supports itself, and its people always live very largely on imported grain, so that when the harvests failed and prices began to rise, all that the merchants had to do was to extend their operations. Secondly, Sāran has long been known as a district from which the inhabitants emigrate very largely, both quasi-permanently and for shorter periods in the winter in search of employment; most

of these emigrants send remittances to their homes, the total amounting to a very large sum every year, and being larger than ever in 1896-97, while the temporary emigrants bring home with them a further portion of their earnings. Lastly, both indigo and the poppy are extensively grown in the district, and large sums thus pass into the hands of the people as the wages of labour.

"In these circumstances, general distress was averted from Sāran, but in certain parts of the district the stress was greater than elsewhere : the rice crop was the greatest failure, and hence it was in the tracts where rice was the only or the principal crop that serious distress occurred, and this circumstance accounts for the curiously variegated character of the Sāran famine map. The Gopālganj subdivision was the most severely affected, for this subdivision contains many large rice swamps, especially in the north and north-west of both its thānas, and also a specially bad tract in the south-east of the subdivision, north of Mashrak, where the soil is poor, the cultivation not so good as elsewhere, and where the crops were a more complete failure. In the Siwān subdivision the worst tracts were a large area in the Daraulī thāna on the west, a broad strip of the country 20 miles long by 16 broad on both sides of the Siwān-Tājpur road, and a smaller tract to the east around the police station of Basantpur. In the Sadar subdivision, the worst tracts were a tract to the north of Mashrak police station, which in effect is a part of the bad tract in Basantpur and the seriously affected tract in the south-east of Gopālganj above enumerated, a strip of 24 miles by 8 to the east of the Bengal and North-Western Railway line and between it and the Garkhā-Siwān road, and a small tract in the extreme south-east of the district.

"All these tracts were not equally affected throughout the time of scarcity, since the area was somewhat contracted when the *rabi* was cut, but during the worst months (May, June and July) the whole district was more or less affected, except the Dighwārā thāna in the south-east and the *diāra* lands along the Gogrā and Gandak rivers ; while the severely distressed tract included the whole of the Gopālganj subdivision, two-thirds of the Siwān subdivision and about half the Sadar subdivision. When the stress relaxed a little, relief was first felt in those tracts which grew *bhadoi* crops, while in those in which rice was the only or the principal crop, relief works and gratuitous relief were maintained till the end of September."

FLOODS. The district has always been peculiarly liable to floods, for when the rainfall is unusually heavy, the drainage channels are

unable to contain all the water, and large tracts are inundated; the consequences are specially disastrous when the waters of the smaller rivers are backed up by high floods in the great rivers into which they flow. The old records are full of complaints about these inundations, which in many cases rendered remissions of revenue necessary. For instance, in September 1787, the Collector reported that several *parganas* were entirely under water, and the whole of the *bhadoi* and a great part of the *aghani* crop was destroyed; villages had been thrown down, and several lives lost: the small rivers flowing from the Gandak swelled to such a degree and ran with such velocity, that nothing could stand before the current, and many thousand cattle were drowned. It seems evident from this description that the Gandak embankment was not then in good order. Since the end of the 18th century, this embankment has more or less completely protected the north-eastern side of the district; but it is still exposed to flood on the south-west and south from the Gogrā and Ganges.

Flood of 1874. In 1871, the town of Chaprā was inundated by the combined floods of those two rivers; and in 1874 there was a still higher flood, when the water rose more than 5 feet above the general level of the town, and Chaprā was only saved by an embankment, which had fortunately been raised and strengthened as a relief work in 1874. It was possible to sail over a great part of the south-eastern portion of the district, which was a sea of water.

Flood of 1890. In 1890, again, a flood in the Gogrā, which breached the zamīndāri embankment from Mānjhi to Tājpur Ghāt on the Gogrā, and that along the western bank of the Dāhā, caused much damage to the *bhadoi* and *aghani* crops, besides loss of houses, cattle and stored grain in a long strip of country, extending over 182 square miles, mainly in the Mānjhi, Daraulī and Chaprā thānas. The flood level on this occasion rose more than 4 feet above the general level of the town of Chaprā.

Flood of 1898. In September 1898 another serious flood occurred owing to abnormally heavy rain, nearly 20 inches of rain falling in 20 days. The inundation which ensued was, however, not due to breaches in the main embankments, though some subsidiary embankments were overtopped; and though the northern portion of Chaprā was waterlogged for the greater part of the month, there was no such flooding of the town as occurred in 1890. It was directly caused by the boundary rivers being in high flood, with the result that the tributary streams became enormous backwaters, especially the Dāhā, which flooded the country along

its course as far as Mīrganj. The tracts where the water accumulated most and stood longest were the centre and south-east of the district, and about one-fourth of 440,000 acres of paddy and 567,000 acres of *bhadoi* crops were damaged. Great temporary discomfort was caused by the collapse of houses in the villages, but as they were merely mud huts, they were easily replaced without any great expense. The cultivators, moreover, were compensated for this loss and the damage to the crops by the abundant moisture left in the land and the rich silt deposited by the overflow of the rivers.

Flood of 1906.

The last serious flood occurred at the end of August 1906, chiefly in the area between the Gandak river and the Gandak embankment, along certain spill channels of the Gandak, such as the Dāhā, and along the banks of the Gogrā river. The most seriously affected tract was a strip of land in the Gopālganj subdivision, along the banks of the Gandak to the north of the embankment. Here the crops were mostly washed away, but this is a tract liable to periodical inundation, as it lies outside the embankment, and is exposed to floods whenever the Gandak over flows. The tract of land along the river Gogrā and south of the Chaprā-Daraulī road, from Guthnī down to Mānjhi in the Siwān subdivision, also suffered much. The area of the tract seriously affected was approximately 175 square miles, with a population of 115,000; while the area of the tract slightly affected was estimated at 25 square miles, and its population at 20,000. The damage caused both to *bhadoi* and *aghani* crops, together with the high prices of principal food-grains then prevailing, made it necessary to give some relief to the people in these tracts. Test relief works were opened, but failed to attract labourers; and it was found sufficient to grant Rs. 53,400 as loans to the agricultural classes, and to expend Rs. 2,300 in gratuitous relief, in addition to Rs. 10,400 spent by the Hathwā Rāj in kitchen relief and on works.

EMBANKMENTS.

Gandak embankment.

To protect the country against inundations caused by the overflow of its great boundary rivers, extensive protective works are necessary. The Gandak is embanked on both sides throughout its course from Tribenī, where it leaves the hill country, to its junction with the Ganges at Sonpur. The length of the embankment in this district is 99 miles, extending from the village of Motīhāri in the north to Sonpur in the south, and there are subsidiary embankments, known as *Chharki* embankments, with a length of 24 miles. The Gandak embankment is one of the oldest embankments in the Province; for it appears from the Collectorate papers that one Dhausī Rām, [illegible]ly the Naib of Muhammad Kāsim

Khān, *Sūbahdār* of Bihār, spent over a lakh of rupees in making this embankment in or about the year 1756. Between that date and 1796 nothing was done to keep the embankment in repair, with the result that it gave way at several points and destructive floods occurred. In 1797, however, it appears to have been brought under the management of Government, which spent nearly Rs. 36,000 on its repair, recovering almost the whole of this sum from the zamīndārs of the tract of country protected. Partial repairs continued to be carried out for the next 25 years, but the embankment was far from giving complete protection, and destructive floods continued to inundate the country. Between 1820 and 1825 the works had fallen into such a ruinous state that the zamīndārs petitioned Government to repair them thoroughly, or to allow them to do so; and eventually it was decided to re-construct the embankment under professional supervision. The work was carried out in 1830.

Since that date, periodical repairs have been carried out when required, the sums expended being recovered from the zamīndārs throughout the district in proportion to the amount of Government revenue payable by them. The embankment is now maintained under a contract for 20 years, from the 1st April 1900, under which the zamīndārs pay an embankment cess assessed at Rs. 23,900 per annum. The management of it rests with the Public Works Department, in which is vested the right of pasturage and of trees growing on it. It is 12 to 13 feet high, and the top is sufficiently wide for the passage of bullock carts.

Though doubts have been raised as to whether the embankment has been constructed in the most advantageous position throughout, it has, on the whole, served its purpose well, having been badly breached only once in 1872, when the damage done by the inundation was estimated at Rs. 2,00,000, and the crops of about 30 villages were completely destroyed. As far, therefore, as the Gandak is concerned, the district has had complete protection since 1830, and partial protection since as far back as 1756. It cannot be maintained, however, that the shutting out of the Gandak water has been attended with unmixed benefits. Before the embankment was erected, the various streams and water-courses, which intersect the district, received each year a large volume of pure, fresh water, which they ultimately conveyed to the Ganges. Now, however, this no longer happens, and the little water that they contain during the cold and hot weather is stagnant and malarious. In years of drought, irrigation is no longer feasible from these sources, as it once was; and the banks

of some of these streams have become so unhealthy that no one will live near them. It was to remedy this state of affairs that the Sāran canals were constructed.

Gogrā embankments. No embankments have ever been maintained by Government along the Gogrā and Ganges; but private embankments have existed along portions of the Gogrā, since a period long before the acquisition of Bihār by the British Government. From the junction of the Little Gandak with the Gogrā, as far as the point where the Dāhā river runs into the latter, the bank is for the most part high, and very little in the way of embankments is needed; south of this point a zamīndāri embankment runs down to a point above Godnā. The Dāhā is also artificially embanked on both sides for some distance above its junction with the Gogrā. Between Revelganj and Sonpur there is very little in the way of embankments. At the beginning of last century, however, it would appear that the *parganas* of Kasmār and Chirānd were partially protected by embankments, which were entirely carried away by extensive floods in 1838; since that date nothing has been done to restore them. The want of proper embankments along the Gogrā river has been severely felt on more than one occasion, even in the last 20 years. As already stated, the breaking of a zamīndāri embankment in 1890 near Mānjhi resulted in a disastrous flood, and this flood led to proposals that Government should take over and improve the embankments along the Gogrā. The project was eventually vetoed, and these works are still left to the care of the zamīndārs and villagers.

CHAPTER VII.

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES.

CASH rents are almost universal, only 4 per cent. of the holdings of settled and occupancy ryots, which account for nearly 85 per cent. of the total number of holdings, paying produce rents. The average rate of rent is higher than in any other district in North Bihār, and is also higher than in the neighbouring districts of the United Provinces. Rents generally rule lower in the north of the district; and the southern part, where the pressure of population is greatest and cultivation most advanced, is mainly responsible for the high rates prevailing. The following table shows the average incidence of the rents recorded at the last settlement for different classes of ryots:— CASH RENTS.

Class of ryots.	Area in acres.	Rent in rupees.	Rate per acre.
			Rs. A. P.
Ryots at fixed rates ...	9,340	30,840	3 4 9
Settled or occupancy ryots ...	1,102,382	47,76,731	4 5 4
Non-occupancy ryots ...	14,185	71,389	5 0 6
Total ...	1,125,907	48,78,960	4 5 4

It will be observed that nearly the whole of the rental of the district is paid by settled and occupancy ryots, only one lakh being payable by ryots at fixed rates and by non-occupancy ryots. The rents paid by settled and occupancy ryots are highest in Sonpur and Chaprā thānas, where the average is Rs. 5-8-7 and Rs. 5-6-4 per acre, respectively; Sonpur being a densely populated thāna, while the rate for Chaprā is raised by the high rents paid for garden lands in the neighbourhood of the town. Ryots at fixed rates pay the lowest rents in Daraulī and Mānjhi thānas, which contain a large number of *bhekhbirits* or resumed rent-free grants, and the highest rents in Basantpur thāna, mainly because it contains some villages with rich and fertile soil in which valuable crops are grown. The rent rate of non-occupancy ryots is

considerably higher than that of occupancy ryots; and as might be expected, under-ryots pay the highest rent rate of all, for though, in some villages, they have proved that they acquire occupancy rights by custom, the majority are merely tenants-at-will and allow the superior ryot to exact what terms he pleases.

Enhancement of rent.

At the assessment made by the orders of Akbar at the end of the 16th century, an all-round rate of about Re. 1-8 per acre was imposed. For 220 years after Akbar's settlement no satisfactory evidence as to rent rates is forthcoming, but it appears that in the beginning of the 19th century the rate was over Re. 1 an acre in the northern part of the district, which was in an unsettled state, and between Rs. 2 and Rs. 4 in the rest of the district, though the rates for good lands capable of bearing special crops were three or four times as much as this. Forty years later a rent rate of Rs. 2-6 was paid in the villages subject to resumption, but there are good grounds for believing that the rate for the district, as a whole, was a good deal higher than this. Finally, in 1870 we find that a rate of Rs. 4-14 per acre prevailed in the area held by the Hathwā Rāj, as a result of three enhancements made in the preceding 20 years; and it is certain that most of the other landlords must have raised their demands to an even greater extent. It is known that, in the estates of petty landlords, enhancements were going on up to the commencement of the recent settlement proceedings; and there can be no doubt that it has only been owing to the provisions of the Tenancy Act, enabling the Settlement Officers to disregard illegal enhancements, that the result of the recent settlement has been such a comparatively moderate rent rate as Rs. 4-5 per acre for the district as a whole.

As regards the methods of enhancement which have been usually resorted to by petty proprietors, the partition of estates under the old Partition Act has been a frequent cause of, or excuse for, enhancement. At the conclusion of the proceedings under that Act, the proprietor of each newly formed estate found himself in possession of what were practically new holdings and had to write up entirely fresh rent-rolls, with little to guide him, even if he desired guidance, as to the previous rent rate or as to what would be a fair rental for the area comprised within the new estate. Small wonder then that he often cut the knot by levying an entirely new and enhanced rate, to which the ryots generally agreed in order to save themselves trouble. Government sales for arrears of revenue have also been, almo[st] invariably followed by an enhancement of rent, and the ry[ots] have seldom made any effort to resist this, the b[...]

universal that the purchaser starts with a *tabula rasa*, and can levy any rent he likes.

In many cases enhancements take place for no apparent reason, and are then generally resisted by the ryots at least for a time. There are two common methods of overcoming this resistance. One is for the landlord to prepare a set of false rent-rolls, extending over a number of years, showing the enhanced rents which he claims, and then to institute suits for arrears of rent against a few ryots. If these ryots can be induced to allow a collusive decree to be passed, so much the better; but if not, the ryots have generally no receipts or rebutting evidence, and the landlord wins his case. The rest of the village is then cowed into submission. If, on the other hand, the landlord is unwilling to incur the odium of raising rents, he lets out his estate to a tenure-holder for a term of years, giving him an enhanced rent-roll to work on. The tenure-holder knows that his connection with the village is a temporary one, and is not too scrupulous as to the methods he adopts for bringing the ryots to terms. He is thus frequently able to hand the village back to the proprietor with a greatly-enhanced rent-roll.

PRODUCE RENTS.

Produce rents are of three kinds,—*batāi*, *bhāoli* and *mankhap*. Under the *batāi* system the actual crop is divided either in the field or on the threshing floor. Under the *bhāoli* system, the value of the crop is appraised on the field before it is cut, and the ryot pays his share to the landlord either in kind or in cash after the harvest. Where the *mankhap* system prevails, the ryot has to pay a certain number of maunds per *bīgha* to the landlord, irrespective of the outturn. This system is seldom met with in Sāran, and is extremely unpopular among the ryots, for the rate is generally so high as to leave the ryot only a small margin of profit in ordinary years, while in bad years he often has to make over the whole produce to his landlord. These disadvantages are not counterbalanced by the fact that in an extremely good year the ryot may be able to retain more of the produce than he would if he paid a *batāi* rent; and on the whole, it may be said that the system has nothing to recommend it from the ryot's point of view. The *batāi* system is the most common in Sāran, and it is sedulously fostered by the *gumāshta* class, to whom it offers unlimited opportunities for pilfering. Further description of produce rents is hardly necessary, for they are of little importance in Sāran. There can be little doubt that their rarity is a sign of agricultural development.

WAGES.

Masons in Chaprā earn daily wages ranging from 4 annas to 5 annas 4 pies, and carpenters from 5 to 6 annas; in the interior,

they are paid 2 annas and given two meals per diem, viz., half a seer of *sattu* at midday, and half a seer of rice or barley flour in the evening, with perhaps an allowance of *dāl.* Labourers are paid 2 annas a day in Chaprā, and 6 Gorakhpurī pice with half a seer of *sattu* outside the town; women get 1½ anna, and boys from 1 to 1½ anna in Chaprā, and in the country 6 Gorakhpurī pice. A house-builder gets 3 to 4 annas in Chaprā, blacksmiths from 4 to 6 annas and Nuniās 4 annas, the corresponding wages in the interior being 2 annas in the first two cases and 8 Gorakhpurī pice in the last. Cooks and house servants get Re. 1 to Rs. 2, besides daily food and two pieces of cloth in a year. A cart-driver gets Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2, in addition to his daily food and two cloths a year. A *sais* or groom gets Rs. 5 to Rs. 7 per mensem, and a sweeper from 8 annas to Rs. 2 per mensem; a barber receives one pice for shaving, and a washerman 4 to 6 annas per score of clothes washed. In the villages, however, barbers and washermen are paid annually at the rate of two *paseris* (10 seers) of grain per head, excluding unmarried boys and girls.

The wages both of village artisans and of field labourers are generally paid in kind. An ordinary full day's wage for digging is three local seers of grain and one seer of *sattu;* the grain and *sattu* are always the cheapest kind available, and in an ordinary year their money value would be rather less than 2 annas. The wages of the hired ploughman are the same as those of an ordinary labourer if he works the whole day, but, as a matter of fact, ploughing is almost entirely done in the forenoon. The ordinary rate in the case of hired ploughs appears to work out to about 3 annas per diem. As a rule, however, the cultivators lend their ploughs to one another and do not need to hire ploughmen and ploughs. For transplanting, which is necessary only in the case of rice and *maruā*, the rates are slighly higher than for ordinary agricultural labour, but their money value hardly exceeds 2 annas per diem; while the rate for weeding and for carting manure comes to only 1½ anna.

For harvesting, payment is nearly always made by giving the labourer a share of the produce, varying from one-sixteenth to one-twentieth. In the case of threshing, the cultivators rarely have any need to employ outside labour, as they act on a system of mutual aid; one cultivator lends his bullocks one day to his neighbour and gets his neighbours' bullocks the next day, the one condition being that the bullocks shall not be muzzled, *i.e.*, the man whose crop is being threshed feeds the bullocks so long as he uses them. For threshing the landlord's crops

a tenant has to lend his bullocks, getting little in return except their feed, and possibly a meal for himself, if he assists personally at the threshing.

Supply of labour.

The cultivation of the *bhadoi*, *aghani* and *rabi* crops affords almost continuous work to labourers from about the end of May, when *tamni* or the preparation of the land for the *bhadoi* crops begins, until the end of October. From the beginning of November to the middle of March is the slack season for labour. In November and December labourers subsist on the produce of their own *bhadoi* fields and on any earnings they can get by working in those of their masters; and during the next 2½ months they live on what they earn from cutting paddy: even though they exchange the paddy they receive for yams and other cheap food, they often have difficulty in making both ends meet. At this time, however, there is a great exodus of labourers in search of employment, the coolies going in thousands to work in the fields, in the docks on the Hooghly, and on the railways, and returning for the agricultural operations which take place with the breaking of the monsoon. They usually borrow about Rs. 6 a head at 25 per cent. to enable them to go to their work; if they get work, they generally send Rs. 6 or Rs. 8, or less, in January to their homes or to the money-lenders. If successful, they come back by rail, bringing from Rs. 20 to Rs. 35 per man: those who fall sick and have no friends, walk back, and may or may not reach their homes.

Regarding the general question of the supply of labour, the following extract is quoted from the Report on Labour in Bengal (1906) by Mr. Foley. "The pressure of the population on the soil is more felt in this district than in any other district of Bengal, and Sāran is the first district in Bengal to come to the point where it cannot maintain its population. Hence, emigration is absolutely necessary, and, excluding certain districts from which tea gardens recruit, the numbers of emigrants are greater than from any other district in India. Sāran supplies labour to all kinds of industries except the coal mines, and the majority of the hands in the jute mills appear to come from this district. The chief exodus of labour from the district is in November and December, the coolies going by rail *viâ* Katihâr to cut the crops in Eastern Bengal. They return in March, April, May, June or the beginning of July. During October and November a large amount of labour is available. There is some little difficulty in procuring labour in the district in July, August and March, but for the rest of the year it is plentiful. I believe the rates and conditions of work in Calcutta industries

are well known in the district. There is a constant flow to and from the mills, and one man will inform a whole village as to what his earnings and work have been. The people of Sāran, I take it, are well aware of the benefits to be derived from employment in the industrial centres, and a larger number than from any other district seek employment in those centres spontaneously."

PRICES

The rice (in seers and chittacks per rupee) of common rice, wheat, gram and salt during the last fortnight in March for the 15 years ending in 1905 is given in the margin. The cheapening of salt during this period is attributed to the reduction of the salt tax.

Years.	Common rice.	Wheat.	Gram.	Salt.
	S. Ch.	S. Ch.	S. Ch.	S. Ch.
1891—1895	13 12½	13 12	17 14	10 13½
1896—1900	13 9	13 0	16 14	11 7
1901—1905	13 13	13 14	16 10	12 7

As regards the prices of food-grains at different times of the year, prices are easy at the beginning of October, when the *bhadoi* crop is well in the market, but they rise sharply by the end of the month, no doubt owing to exportation; by the end of November they are again easier with the incoming of the great *aghani* rice crop, and then rise with more or less regularity till the end of February. In the month of March relief comes with the ingathering of the *rabi* harvest, and prices fall till about the end of April or the middle of May, when a rise commences once more, which continues till the early *bhadoi* crops come in towards the end of July. These crops are so cheap and plentiful, that the general average then falls sharply till the end of September.

The harvesting of each of the three great crops naturally ushers in a distinct fluctuation in prices. Grain is, on the whole, cheapest in September, just after the *bhadoi* is in; not quite so cheap early in May, when the *rabi* has all been gathered home; and less cheap at the end of November, when the rice reaches the market. Conversely, grain is dearest just before each of these three harvests is reaped, *i.e.*, in October, February and July. It might have been thought that as rice is the largest and most important crop in the district, its advent would have had the greatest effect on the prices of food; but it must be remembered that, owing to the demand for exportation, rice is never a very cheap grain. The same consideration holds good in a less and still lesser degree as regards the *rabi* and the *bhadoi*, for this latter crop (except maize) is but little exported; in other words, and speaking generally, the influence of each

crop on prices varies inversely with the demand upon it for exportation.

The maximum price of paddy during the famine of 1866 was Rs. 5-10 per standard maund and of rice Rs. 8 per maund; the highest price that rice reached in 1874 was 9 seers per rupee. In the famine of 1897 the price of rice rose to 9 seers in October 1896, was as high as 8 seers a rupee in the second fortnight of May, and reached the maximum of 7¼ seers per rupee during the second half of June. Maize started at 12 seers at the beginning of December 1896, rose to 10½ seers in the first three months of 1897, and reached the highest price of 6½ seers at the end of June. The cheapest articles of food throughout the famine were *maruā*, which, however, was only obtainable in small quantities, and barley. The former sold at 13 seers to 13½ seers till March, and then disappeared from the market. The latter began to sell at 14 seers at the end of February, and then rose steadily to 13 seers at the end of May and to 10 seers 10 chittacks at the end of July. Famine prices.

It is of some interest to compare the high prices now prevailing with those of 30 years ago. In 1907 the price of common rice has been consistently above 10 seers a rupee, even after the breaking of the monsoon, without relief measures being necessary; whereas in Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal (published in 1877) it was stated that the rise of the price of rice to 12 seers per rupee and of maize to 15 seers per rupee would, in the opinion of the Collector, necessitate the opening of relief works.

From the enquiries made at the last settlement it appears that an average family in Sāran consists of 5 members, and that an ordinary cultivator has to spend Rs. 15 a year to maintain each person in his family. It may be therefore inferred that an ordinary agricultural family in Sāran will require Rs. 75 a year to maintain itself in moderate comfort. The average profits of cultivation have been, on careful calculation, estimated at Rs. 25-10 per acre, so that an ordinary family of 5 members will be able to manage with a holding of 3 acres. If they carry on the work of cultivation themselves, and spend nothing on it except the cost of seed, the profits would amount to Rs. 30 per acre, and a holding of 2½ acres would consequently suffice for their maintenance in an ordinary year, while a family with 3 acres would be fairly comfortable, if not in debt. It is satisfactory, therefore, to find that the average size of the holding of a family of pure cultivators (who form more than three-fifths of the total population of the district) is 3·8 acres, *i.e.*, it exceeds the subsistence holding (2½ acres) by more than an acre. MATERIAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

Consequently the pure cultivators, as a body, if they are not in debt, should be in fairly comfortable circumstances. Of the labourers, about 240,000, or one-tenth of the total population, have holdings so small that they cannot maintain themselves on them in moderate comfort, and a similar proportion have no land at all, but must live entirely on the wages they earn. These cultivating and landless labourers, forming altogether 20 per cent. of the total population, are probably unable to save anything even in the best of years, and it is this class which must perforce turn to Government for relief in a year of scarcity. But it is noticeable that, even in the great famine of 1896-97, they displayed considerable staying powers and must have managed to maintain themselves without the assistance of Government, for the largest number of persons relieved on any one day was 58,173, or only 6 per cent. of the population of the affected area.

Indebtedness.

Regarding indebtedness, Mr. Kerr writes:—"The ordinary cultivator should be able to save sufficient in good and ordinary years to tide him over an occasional season of short crops. There seems to be no reason why he should fall into debt. But, as a matter of fact, a very large proportion of the cultivators is in debt. Mr. Tytler goes so far as to say that 95 per cent. of the ryots live and die in debt; and that they die in debt follows, as a matter of course, in the great majority of cases from the fact that they are born in debt and make no effort during their lifetime to pay off their debt. Our statistics of mortgages do not disclose such a degree of indebtedness as was estimated by Mr. Tytler. They show that only 5½ per cent. of the total ryoti area is mortgaged, and that only 15 per cent. of the total number of holdings are affected either in whole or in part by mortgages on the land. The total indebtedness of the ryots, as recorded by us, is just under Rs. 50,00,000, or little more than one-tenth of the value of the gross outturn in an ordinary year. Amounts lent on security other than the land are of course not included, but the land is the ryot's chief source of credit, and only petty loans are granted on other security. Our statistics also do not include mortgages in which the land is given as security, but possession is retained by the borrower. But the lender is generally too much afraid of a previous mortgage to advance money without obtaining possession; and loans of this kind are, as a rule, made only to persons whose credit is otherwise good, and do not represent any serious or permanent addition to the indebtedness of the agricultural classes.

"Allowing for all this, and for the fact that the original amount of the debt is generally swelled by the addition of the

compound interest, we shall be safe in saying that the total indebtedness of the Sāran ryots is well under a crore of rupees. As we shall see, the gross annual profits derived by the ryots from the area in their cultivation after payment of rent is usually over $3\frac{1}{2}$ crores. The indebtedness of the Sāran peasantry, as a whole, cannot, therefore, be considered a very serious matter. But it must be remembered that the indebtedness is borne by not more than 20 per cent. of the total number of holdings. The proportionate annual profits of these would be little over 60 lakhs, and as practically the whole of this must be required for subsistence purposes, there is little chance of the debt being paid off from the profits of cultivation alone. As a matter of fact, too, many of the ryots take no trouble to pay off their debts. The profits of a good year are made the excuse for increased expenditure on marriages and other ceremonies. Under these circumstances, it is perhaps satisfactory to find the total amount of the cultivators' indebtedness no higher than it is. But though four-fifths of pure cultivators are probably not in debt at all, or at all events are not sufficiently involved to be compelled to part with their lands for the purpose of raising money, and though these can, taking one year with another, maintain themselves in moderate comfort by the profits of cultivation, it must not be supposed that the district could support any addition to the agricultural community without immediate deterioration of the condition of that community as a whole. Many members of the agricultural community must suffer severely in bad years, and, though the greater part of the cultivating classes can earn a comfortable livelihood at present, any considerable increase in their numbers under present conditions must be followed by substantial reduction of the standard of comfort."

After pointing out that Sāran, having reached the point at which it can no longer support an increase in its population in moderate comfort from the produce of the soil, is meeting this strain on *its* resources, not by further subdivision of holdings and a consequent reduction in the standard of comfort, but by emigration, Mr. Kerr goes on to summarize his conclusions as follows :—
"(1) Eighty-four per cent. of the total population of Sāran, or just over two million souls, are entirely dependent on agriculture as a means of livelihood. (2) A quarter of a million of these have no lands at all, or only minute plots, and are practically dependent on the wages of labour. Rather more than half of this class had to turn to Government for relief during the last famine. (3) Another quarter of a million have small holdings not exceeding two acres on the average for each family. This

is insufficient to support them, and they have to eke out their livelihood by working for other cultivators. (4) The remaining one-half million have holdings exceeding on the average 3½ acres per family. These are pure cultivators, who only work in their own fields. As the smallest holding on which a family can be supported is 2½ acres, this class as a body is in a moderate condition of comfort. Less than one-fifth of them are in debt to the extent that they have had to part with their holdings or portions of them in order to borrow money, and only one-twentieth of the ryoti area is mortgaged in this way. (5) The total amount of indebtedness of this kind is less than one-third of the share of the gross annual produce secured by the cultivating classes. On the other hand, the indebtedness is borne by less than one-fifth of the whole body of ryots, and on them it must press heavily. (6) Under the present conditions of agriculture, the district is incapable of supporting any considerable increase of population without a material reduction in the standard of comfort. (7) Even now the district produces barely sufficient food for its own requirements, but the excellence of its communications greatly lessens the gravity of this factor."

"The picture thus drawn," he adds, "contains both light and shade. Apart from the landless labourers, whose condition must always be precarious, the rest of the agricultural community, as a whole, enjoy a moderate degree of comfort and can withstand a season of scarcity without turning to Government for relief. Their indebtedness is relatively small, and their lands are not passing into the hands of professional money-lenders to any appreciable extent. The census figures, and the conduct of the people in the last famine, show that they would rather emigrate than submit to a reduction of their standard of comfort or to further subdivision of their holdings. If this spirit prevails and spreads throughout the less enterprising classes, there should be no fear of any deterioration in the material condition of the Sāran agricultural community."*

* J. H. Kerr, *Sāran Survey and Settlement Report*, Calcutta, 1903.

CHAPTER VIII.

OCCUPATIONS, MANUFACTURES AND TRADE.

ACCORDING to the statistics obtained at the census of 1901, no less than 81 per cent. of the population are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, this being the highest proportion in Bihār. Nine per cent. are engaged in various industries, four per cent. are general labourers, the professional classes account for one per cent., and the remainder follow other occupations. Of those dependent on agriculture, 90 per cent. are rent-payers, 6 per cent. are labourers, and 2 per cent. are rent-receivers. Rather less than half (49 per cent.) are actual workers, including 851,000 rent-payers, 15,000 rent-receivers, and 92,000 field labourers; but the actual number of persons who are, in the main, dependent on field labour is much greater. Grain-parchers (16,000), cow-keepers (12,000), indoor servants (11,000), grocers (11,000), oilmen, washermen and potters are numerous, and so are saltpetre refiners, mat-makers, and vegetable sellers. In most of these occupations females take a prominent part, and the number of women who earn their own living is exceptionally large. It is a remarkable fact, for instance, that of every 100 rent-paying tenants who are actual workers, as many as 37 are women; while the female agricultural labourers are more than double the number of male labourers. Female labour is, in fact, more extensively employed than in any other district in Bengal. OCCUPATIONS.

The chief industries of Sāran are connected with agriculture, viz., the manufacture of indigo, sugar and opium, which bring large sums of money into the district and afford employment to many thousands of its inhabitants. The only other important industry is the manufacture of saltpetre, but there are a number of small handicrafts, such as the manufacture of brass and pottery, cloth-weaving, oil-pressing, etc. MANUFACTURES.

The indigo industry has been the premier industry of Sāran for the last half-century, but is now losing its pre-eminence owing to the competition of artificial dye. It still, however, plays an important part in the rural economy of the district, and an account of it will be given in the next chapter. Indigo.

Sugar manufacture. One of the immediate results of the decline of the indigo industry has been the manufacture of refined sugar on an extensive scale. This, curiously enough, is a return to an earlier state of things, for many of the indigo concerns originally started as sugar factories, the manufacture of sugar being given up when indigo proved more profitable. The reverse process is now taking place, and factories are replacing indigo by sugar. The resuscitation of the sugar industry was pioneered by the India Development Company, which a few years ago established a head factory at Ottur in Muzaffarpur, and a branch factory at Barhogā in this district, the cane being crushed, and the juice boiled, clarified, and made into sugar by elaborate machinery imported from Europe. The Barhogā factory has now been closed; but modern sugar works have also been opened at Marhorā by the Cawnpore Sugar Works Company, and at Bankath and Siwān, which carry on work on a large scale. The number of native refineries has also increased in recent years, rising from 53 in 1899-1900 to 93 in 1904-05.

Molasses (*gur*) are prepared by the cultivators, who grow the cane and press the juice, either with the old fashioned *kolhu*, a kind of pestle and mortar arrangement used also for expressing oil, or more commonly with cheap iron roller mills manufactured locally in imitation of the better ones made at Bihiā or Kushtia by European firms. The sugar manufactured by the native refiners is chiefly exported to the United Provinces and Calcutta.

Opium. The manufacture of opium is another industry of great importance, because of the large sums it brings to the cultivators. The first process consists of the manufacture of what is known as "leaf," which begins when the poppy plants flower in January and February. As soon as the flowers mature, the petals are collected and put in an earthenware plate, placed over a slow fire and covered by a damp cloth. They are then pressed by means of a cloth-pad, until the steam, acting upon the resinous matter contained in the petals, causes them to adhere together and form a thin round cake varying from 6 to 12 inches in diameter. In the case of leaves of the highest quality, which are called *chāndi*, the thick portion by which they are attached to the capsules is usually cut off. The leaves are delivered to the officers of the Opium Department, and are paid for according to quality. After delivery, they are sent to the Factory at Patna, where they are used in making the outer shell or envelope of the opium balls. The dried leaves and thinner portions of the stalks of the poppy plants, broken up fine, form what is known as "trash," which is used, after being thoroughly sifted and cleaned, for

packing balls of provision opium for exportation, and also for affixing to the cake. A small portion is hand-sifted and reduced to a fine powder like saw-dust, which is used for dusting the cakes immediately after manufacture, to prevent them sticking to the earthenware cups in which they are stored.

After the petals have been taken off and the capsules allowed to ripen, they are ready for the extraction of the juice. The capsules are lanced vertically in the afternoon, at intervals of 3 or 4 days, with an instrument composed of three or four sharp iron blades tied together, the incisions being sufficiently deep to let the juice flow freely from the shell of the capsule, without breaking through its inner wall into the receptacle for seed. The juice is then allowed to exude and coagulate on the capsule until the next morning, when it is scraped off. The scrapings are collected in shallow brass or earthen vessels, and tilted up so as to allow the draining off of a black shiny substance, called *pasewā*, which is formed under certain atmospheric conditions. The *pasewā* is collected separately and taken over from the cultivators by the Department. On the care with which the *pasewā* is separated from the drug depends, to a great extent, the purity of the opium delivered. The drug is periodically turned over and manipulated until the time fixed for its weighment, which takes place usually about the middle of April, when the cultivators are summoned in regular order to certain appointed weighing places, where the weighment of the opium is conducted under the direct supervision of gazetted officers of the Department.

The drug is classified according to its consistence by the officer in charge, who also examines it for adulteration. Should the opium be found to contain any foreign substance or be suspected of such, it is set aside for subsequent and more detailed examination by the Opium Examiner at the Factory; and, on that officer's report, the opium is either confiscated, or a reduction made from its value according to the degree of adulteration. Good opium is paid for on delivery at the rate of Rs. 6 per seer of 70 degrees consistence or more, *i.e.*, if it contains 70 per cent. or more of pure opium, and the price falls if the drug contains less than 70 per cent. of pure opium. After classification and weighment, the opium, if of low quality, is placed in earthen jars, but if more solid, *i.e.*, of over 67 degrees consistence, it is put in stout drill bags, which are then sealed and despatched to the Patna Factory, where it is manufactured into the opium of commerce.

The production of saltpetre was formerly one of the most important industries of Sāran. It appears first to have been Saltpetre.

exploited by the Dutch, who, as stated in Chapter II, established a factory at Chaprā before 1666; and by the beginning of the 18th century the English had also set up their "peter godowns" there. Even as late as the beginning of the 19th century, when saltpetre was in great demand for the manufacture of gunpowder during the long French war, it was a flourishing industry; and in Hamilton's Description of Hindostān (1820) we find it stated that the greater part of the saltpetre intended for the Company's investment was procured from Hājīpur and the adjacent division of Sāran. The fall of prices caused the Europeans who formerly engaged in the trade to withdraw their capital, and the manufacture is now entirely in the hands of natives. It is a declining industry, and the outturn has decreased steadily of late years. A series of bad seasons, combined with low prices in Calcutta, has had an injurious effect on the manufacture, and many refineries have been closed. The outturn of saltpetre has, accordingly, fallen from 84,000 maunds in 1895-96 to 60,000 maunds in 1904-05, and that of the salt educed during the manufacture from 8,000 maunds to less than 5,000 maunds. The annual outturn is still, however, larger than in any other Bihār district, except Muzaffarpur.

Crude saltpetre (*ābi sorā*) is manufactured from the saliferous earth found near village homesteads by a rough process of filtration. The industry is in the hands of a hardy caste of salt workers, called Nuniās, and is under the control of the Northern India Salt Department, which grants licenses permitting the manufacture. Before the saltpetre becomes fit for the market, it has to be refined in the village refinery, which generally belongs to a man of some capital, who has advanced money to the Nuniās. The process of refining is very simple. Crude saltpetre is mixed with water and boiled in a pan for some hours, the impurities being skimmed off. The liquor is then taken out of the pan and placed in earthen vats to cool. After cooling for some hours, it is taken out of the first vat, placed in another earthen vessel, and allowed to cool for three days. The deposit is then strained through baskets and dried, and the process is complete. Small quantities of salt are produced from the liquor left in the earthen pots after the manufacture of crude saltpetre, as well as after the manufacture of what is called *kothiā sorā*, another form of refined saltpetre. Another bye-product is sulphate of soda, which is exported to Patna and to Upper India. It is used for curing hides and fattening cattle, and, in some parts of Bengal, as an artificial manure for certain crops.

Other minerals.

Nodular limestone (*kankar*) of good quality is found throughout the district except in the north-west corner. It is used for

metalling roads and for ballast on the railway, and is also exported to Patna. The supply is said to be diminishing owing to the large demands made upon it. Pottery clay of a superior kind is found near the town of Siwān, and pottery is made from it.

Coarse cloth is woven in many places, but the industry, which was never very important, is declining with the importation of English piece-goods. The native carpets called *darīs* are manufactured at Rāmpur near Siwān. The apparatus used is of the usual rough kind employed in Bihār and needs no description. Attempts have been made to train the local weavers in the use of fly-shuttle, but have not been successful. A good deal of cotton is spun at Mīrganj, but as a rule imported yarn is used. **Cloth weaving and printing.**

In Siwān a few families are engaged in coarse but rather effective printing on cloth. The cloth is first dipped in a mixture of powdered myrobalan and water, and after being dried in the sun attains a light khaki colour. It is then stamped by hand with various figures, emblems of flowers, etc., in black and red with wooden seals or stamps imported from Mīrzapur. After being washed, the stamped cloth is dipped in large iron or copper pans containing some reddish colour mixed with water, which is heated over a fire for about two hours. This process serves to enhance the brilliancy and stability of the printed colours. The cloth, after being taken out of the pan, is again washed and is then ready for sale. It is used for making the quilt-coverings called *razāis*, and for *farash* or thin druggets. *Sārīs* are also printed in this way.

Another common form of printing on cloth consists of stamping coloured *sārīs* with silver or gold leaf ornamentation. The printer presses a gummed stamp on to the *sārī*, and then impresses on the gummed impressions a pad, to which gold or silver leaf, obtained from Ballia or Patna, is attached. The leaf adheres to the gummed impression, and a flower-like pattern is produced. These cloths are in great demand at weddings, but the impression is effaced when the cloth is washed.

The brass work of Siwān has more than a local reputation, which is well deserved, as the materials are good and the workmanship excellent. Clay mounds only are used, however, and the methods of the braziers are primitively simple. They first prepare a clay mould, and after mixing the different metals until the required alloy has been obtained, pour the mixture into the mould. The brass, when cool, is beaten and polished. The materials are brass or *phul*, *i.e.*, a compound of copper and spelter, and it is for its *phul* manufacture that Siwān is best known. **Brass work.**

Sometimes to increase the brilliancy, silver is mixed with the copper and spelter, the mixture being called *sausatāis*, *i.e.*, 127; this is only made to order, as its manufacture is said to be difficult, besides being too expensive for ordinary use. A bell-metal ware, called *bedhā*, is also produced at Siwān from copper and zinc, and is worked up into supports for hookahs and other ornamental articles; it takes a brilliant polish and is much in demand.

Pottery.

The best pottery in Sāran is also made at Siwān from a peculiar kind of tenacious clay, called *kohrauti*, found close to the town. Much of the pottery turned out is remarkable both for its shape and decoration, and has a much higher finish than is usually seen in native pottery. The vessels are baked in earthen jars, so as not to come in contact with the flames, and when so baked are black. They are then glazed with a mixture of fuller's earth (*sajji mathi*) and clay, found at Khodaibāgh in the Siwān subdivision and at Gawandari in the Gopālganj subdivision. The mixture is combined with mango bark, and when dried, is powdered up, mixed with water, and applied as a glaze. To complete the ornamentation, quicksilver in a powdered state is applied delicately with a needle to give a silvery colour, and brass dust to give a golden colour, the surface being rubbed with a flat stone.

Other industries.

The manufacture of lac has of late years assumed some importance, and there are several lac factories in Chaprā. The lac is propagated on the *pīpal* tree and is exported to Calcutta. Country spirit is manufactured in the usual way from molasses (*gur*) and the flower of the *mahuā* tree (Bassia latifolia) in licensed outstills all over the district, and in a small Government distillery at Chaprā. Four soap factories are reported to be working in Siwān; some tobacco is manufactured at Dighwārā in the Gopālganj subdivision; and at Sonpur there are railway workshops employing about 1,000 hands.

TRADE.

The principal imports are rice, paddy and other food-grains from Muzaffarpur, Darbhangā and Bhāgalpur, cotton piece-goods, salt and kerosene-oil from Calcutta, and coal from the Rānīganj and Giridih coal-fields. The exports are opium, sugar, indigo, saltpetre, lac, molasses, linseed, mustard seed, gram, pulses and other food-grains. Most of the exports go to Calcutta, but the sugar finds a market in the United Provinces. The distinguishing feature of Sāran, of all the districts in Bihār, is the extent to which the balance of trade is against it. It never produces sufficient food for its own consumption, and imports consequently exceed exports, the cost of the surplus imports being met largely from the earnings of natives of the district employed elsewhere.

The amount remitted by money-order is exceptionally large, being over 44½ lakhs in 1906-07; the large amount thus brought into the district represents, not payments for exports, but a vast number of small sums sent for the support of their families by persons in service in the army, working as *darwāns* in Calcutta or as labourers in the docks and mills, or employed in menial work in other parts of Bengal. It is to the amount brought into the district in this way, as well as to the large payments made by Government to the opium cultivators and the considerable local outlay of the indigo factories, that the lower classes owe immunity from want.

The grain trade is of especial importance in Sāran, as even at the best of times the district never feeds itself. Consequently, its merchants are thoroughly acquainted with the grain trade; when crops fail and prices rise, the *baniyā* merely buys thousands of maunds where he bought hundreds before, knowing well that he cannot fail to sell his stock, since the purchasing power of the district is very great indeed, owing to the large sums brought into it by opium, by indigo, and by the remittances of emigrants.

The main trade route of the district is the Bengal and North-Western Railway, which traverses it from Sonpur to Mairwā, and thence continues to skirt the Mīrganj thāna: at least 75 per cent. of the traffic is carried by the railway. The chief importing centres are Chaprā, Revelganj, Siwān, Mahārājganj, Mairwā and Mīrganj. In addition to the above, many of the stations have considerable marts connected with them, where grain is stored and distributed, Sonpur, Dighwārā and Ekmā being three of the most important entrepots. Thence are supplied the minor centres all over the district, where as a rule very little grain is actually stored; sufficient for the weekly market being brought in from the nearest large centre or from the surrounding villages. The number of these small centres is very large, and there are few villages in the district that are not within a few miles of a bazar, for the district has a perfect network of roads, which provide the necessary means of communication.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INDIGO INDUSTRY.

PROGRESS OF THE INDUSTRY. THE indigo industry appears to have been introduced in Bihār between 1782 and 1785 by Francois Grand, Collector of Tirhut (Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā), who left it on record that he introduced the manufacturing of indigo after the European manner, encouraged the establishment of indigo works and plantations, and erected three at his own expense. A few years later the industry was started in Sāran, the first attempt to cultivate and manufacture the dye being made in 1793, when Dr. Ivory, Civil Surgeon at Chaprā, and Mr. Robert Blake, Assay Master at the Patna Mint, obtained permission from Government to build a factory at Akbarpur (now Sītalpur) in the Sonpur thāna. About the same time, Mr. Champain began building another factory close by at Shikārpur, and in 1794 Mr. Shore obtained permission to start a factory at or near Daraulī; a license was granted to him to hold 50 *bīghas* of land, but we find five years later, in 1799, that his successor was in possession of as much as 3,750 *bīghas*, half of which were under indigo. Subsequently Mr. Champain, who had not obtained a license from Government, appears to have left the factory at Shikārpur; and having been authorized to hold land for indigo cultivation, started work at Anantpur, close to the junction of the Ganges and Gandak, where he was succeeded in 1799 by Messrs. Douie and Maitland.

During the early part of the 19th century factories were established in all parts of the district, but up to about 1850 the cultivation of indigo by Europeans seems to have been combined with the growth and manufacture of sugar. About 1850 the high prices obtained for indigo dealt a fatal blow at the latter industry; the cultivation of sugar was replaced by indigo, and the sugar factories were converted into indigo concerns. After this, the industry continued to flourish until the end of the 19th century, when there were no less than 35 indigo factories and 36 outworks with 45,500 acres under cultivation. During the last 10 years the industry has suffered from the competition of the artificial dye in Europe and from the high price of food-grains and the consequent demand for land in Bihār. The price of the natural dye has fallen rapidly and the area under cultivation has contracted greatly,

being returned at only 11,200 acres in 1906-07. Government has come to the aid of the planters with substantial grants for scientific research, the aim of which is to ascertain whether it is possible to increase the outturn and quality of the dye at a cheaper cost: excellent work in the chemistry, bacteriology and agriculture of indigo has been done and is still progressing; and efforts have been made to improve the quality of the plant by importing fresh seed from Natal. But so far these experiments have not succeeded in arresting the decay of the industry. The price obtained for indigo is barely sufficient to cover the cost of production, and many factories are either closing altogether or are reducing the area cultivated with indigo, growing in its place sugar, cotton and country crops.

CULTIVATION. Seed.

For a long time past the seed used in Sāran has been imported, for the most part, from the United Provinces, and the system of getting seed in this way, without any special selection, has caused deterioration in the varieties commonly grown. Recently, however, Natal indigo (*Indigofera arrecta*) has been introduced, the seed being obtained direct from Natal and also from plants acclimatized in Java. This plant has been found to give a very considerable increase of colouring matter, and will produce excellent cuttings for two years in succession and mediocre plants for a third year, whereas other varieties have to be resown annually. It has a more vigorous habit of growth than the old variety, and the leaf contains a larger proportion of the colour-yielding principle.

Soils and manures.

Indigo may follow indigo, but is more generally rotated with such crops as sugarcane, tobacco, poppy, cereals and oilseeds. It is an exhausting crop, which cannot well be grown on the same land for more than three successive seasons; on the other hand, being a deep-root crop it forms an excellent rotation crop for those which have surface roots, as is the case with many food-grains. It is usually grown on high lands beyond the reach of floods, deep alluvial loams seeming to suit the crop best. The refuse indigo plant (*sīth*) is the manure most easily obtained and is very valuable; but it is said that it is less suited for indigo itself than for rotation crops, such as those mentioned above, and that indigo grown on land heavily treated with *sīth* is liable to injury from insect-pests. Farm manures, chemical manures, such as saltpetre and lime, bone-dust and oil-cake are also used.

Tillage.

The land on which indigo is to be grown is prepared for sowing as soon as the *kharif* crops have been reaped. The land is ploughed and reploughed until the clods are all pulverized, and after being manured, is levelled and smoothed with a plank roller composed of a long heavy beam on which two men stand,

The seed is sown at the beginning of the hot weather; and after sowing, the roller is again used to level the surface. The seedlings are very delicate until their roots are well developed, and many perish owing to dry west winds. They make slow progress until the monsoon sets in, when the growth becomes rapid; and they are ready for cutting, which takes place immediately before they flower, in July or August. A second crop, known as the *khunti* crop, is obtainable in September, but usually yields less than the first crop. The colouring matter from which indigotin is derived exists almost entirely in the leaf of the plant. It increases as the plant grows, but deteriorates after a certain stage; and it is imperative that the plant should be cut as soon as it is ripe and carted off quickly to the factory for manufacture.

MANUFACTURE. Steeping and oxidation.

The first process of manufacture consists of steeping the leaves, which is done in two sets of vats, one on a lower level than the other. Those on the highest level are used for steeping the plant, which is kept submerged by logs of wood or bars fixed in position. During this process active fermentation takes place, and when it is complete, the liquid is drained off into the lower vats, and is there subjected to a brisk beating, the effect of which is to cause oxidation and separate the particles of dye. As the oxidation proceeds, dark blue particles of indigotin appear in the liquid, and the beating is continued until a little of the liquid placed in a saucer readily throws a dark blue precipitate. Oxidation was at one time accomplished by hand-beating, but in most factories it is now done by a beating wheel worked by power from a central engine.

Boiling and final preparation.

Finally, the sediment (*māl*) which remains in the vat is boiled, strained, and made up into cakes for the market. The first process in the final stages of manufacture is to boil the precipitate which settles after oxidation. The dye matter is next placed on a cloth strainer until it becomes fairly dry. It is then carried to the press and subjected to gradually increasing pressure until it has taken the form of firm slabs, which are cut into cakes and slowly dried on racks.

LANDED INTERESTS.

The indigo concerns, as a whole, hold very little land as proprietors or permanent tenure-holders, owing to the reluctance of proprietors to sell their estates or alienate their interests by granting permanent (*mukarari*) tenures. The latter are particularly rare, and, as a rule, factories hold practically no land on permanent lease, except the area occupied by their factory buildings and a few scattered patches, which circumstances have enabled them to obtain on favourable terms. The bulk of the factories' interest in the land is of a temporary nature, based on

what are known as *thīkā* leases, which run for short periods hardly ever exceeding nine years. The ordinary conditions of these leases are that the factory shall pay the proprietor a certain amount, which is, as a rule, the total amount of the rent-roll of the village plus Rs. 8 or Rs. 10 per *bīgha* available for indigo cultivation, and that on the expiry of the lease the factory shall vacate all lands in the village, after the indigo crop then on the ground has been cut. As undertenure-holders, factories hold a very small area, mainly on mortgage of some kind or other.

The main object of factories in acquiring these proprietary and *quasi*-proprietary rights is to secure land for the cultivation of indigo, either direct through their own servants, or through the ordinary ryots of the villages. A factory rarely attempts to make a profit over rent collections; not infrequently, indeed, it is content to collect less from the ryots than it has to pay to the superior landlord, for its object is to keep the ryots contented and to make them willing to grow indigo or supply land for the cultivation of indigo.

Temporary tenures. The temporary tenures held by the concerns are either simple leases, under which the factory agrees to pay a certain rent for a term of years, or of the nature of usufructuary mortgages, the factory advancing a certain sum to the superior landlords at the beginning of the lease. The terms of repayment vary. Under a *sadua patua* lease, both principal and interest are liquidated before the end of the period of the lease by yearly deductions from the rent payable to the proprietors. Under a *zarpeshgī* lease, the interest only is liquidated by deductions from the annual rent, and the principal is repayable at the end of the term, the lessee having a right to continue in the enjoyment of the tenure until the principal is repaid. The latter system is the more common, and is preferred by planters, because the proprietor is often unable to repay the advance on the expiry of the lease, and the factory thus continues in possession of the tenure indefinitely.

***Pānch kathiā* system.** A factory taking a lease of a village obtains direct possession of all lands which were in the cultivation of the proprietor. Formerly it was also the custom for the ryots, if required, to give up a certain proportion of their holdings, generally 3 or 5 *kathās* in the *bīgha*, to the factory for the direct cultivation of indigo. They received a proportionate deduction of their rent during the term of the factory's lease and a promise that their land should be restored to them on its expiry. This system, which is known as *tin kathiā* or *pānch kathiā*, is open to many objections, not the least of which is that it frequently has the effect of obliterating tenant right. Though leases rarely run for more than 9 years,

they are often renewed as a matter of course, and if they are *zarpeshgī* leases, may continue for an indefinite period. Thus, a factory may retain continuously the lease of a village and possession of the *pānch kathiā* lands for a generation or more, and when the time comes for the village to be returned to the proprietor, it is often impossible, in the absence of any map or record, and after the obliteration of field boundaries, which indigo cultivation entails, to say what particular block belongs to a particular holding. The system is, however, now dying out.

Ryoti interests.

The factories possess ryoti interests in a small area, these interests being usually acquired by purchase at a Civil Court sale for arrears of rent. The provisions of the law facilitate such acquisition of ryoti rights in a district like Sāran, where proprietary interests are minutely subdivided, and it is common for a factory to hold a lease of a share in an undivided estate. Under a ruling of the High Court, a tenure-holder holding a lease of a share of an estate can acquire occupancy rights during the continuance of his lease, and by paying rent to the proprietors of the share not in lease to him, become a ryot for all the land in his direct occupation. Tenure-holding factories especially have taken full advantage of these provisions, for it is worth their while to pay a good price for an occupancy holding containing good lands, and purchase at a Civil Court sale gives them a clear title. Hence, it often happens that, on the expiry of their lease, they are able to retain possession as occupancy ryots of a considerable amount of land which they have acquired in this way during the term of the lease.

Kurtaulī leases.

A considerable area is held by the factories as under-ryots, part being acquired on the *pānch kathiā* system described above, but most being held on what are called *kurtaulī* leases, which are gradually displacing the *pānch kathiā* system. Under these leases, the factory pays the ryot a sum equivalent to five or seven years' rental of the land for which the sub-lease is granted, and cultivates the land for that period, at the end of which it reverts to the ryot. The main objection to this system from the factory's point of view is the risk of the ryot going off with the advance without paying his rent, for in that case the landlord may sell up the holding and refuse to recognize the factory, which consequently loses its money. In practice, however, the risk is not very great, as *kurtaulī* leases are usually granted for parts of holdings only, and the ryot remains in the village to cultivate the remainder.

Sud-bharna leases.

A modification of the *kurtaulī* lease is the *sud-bharna*, which resembles the *zarpeshgī* tenure described above. The factory gives the ryot an advance, the interest on which is liquidated

by deduction from the annual rent for the land sublet. The principal is repayable at the end of the lease, but, as in the case of *zarpeshgī* tenures, the borrower is often unable to meet his obligations, and the factory retains possession of the land indefinitely. This system is prevented from being common by the fact that, as a rule, only a ryot who is deeply involved is willing to bind himself to the factory in this way, and a man in such a position can give the factory no security for its money beyond the land, which is worthless if he should default in payment of his rent to the superior landlord.

SYSTEMS OF CULTIVATION.

The main systems of indigo cultivation practised in Sāran are known as *zirāat*, *i.e.*, the home-farm system of direct cultivation by means of hired servants, the *satta* system of cultivation through factory tenants under contracts, and *khushkī* or cultivation by means of outside ryots.

Zirāat system.

The name *zirāat* is applied to all lands cultivated by the factory direct with hired labour, either as proprietor, tenure-holder, ryot or under-ryot. Over three-fourths of the area under indigo is of this class, and owing to its careful cultivation it returns the best profits.

Satta system.

The *satta* system is so-called because a document (*satta*) is executed by the ryot, who usually belongs to a village of which the factory is the landlord. By this document he enters into a contract to grow indigo on a certain portion of his holding in consideration of an advance of money, either without interest or at a low rate of interest; he further binds himself to pay damages to the factory if he should fail to carry out his share of the agreement. The factory supplies the seed, and carts the indigo when cut to the vats for manufacture, but the ryot is responsible for the preparation of the land and for all expenses of cultivation. The indigo when delivered to the factory is paid for at a certain rate per *bīgha*; if the crop should fail through no fault of the ryot, he is paid between Rs. 5 and Rs. 6 a *bīgha* to recoup him for the expenses of cultivation. The agreement is usually executed for the same term as that of the factory's lease of the village, and the original advance, with principal and interest, is worked off by easy deductions from the sum annually payable to the ryot. Agreements of this kind are usually only executed by tenants of the factory, but occasionally they are executed by ryots entirely independent of the factory, and are then known as *khushkī* or voluntary *sattas*.

Khushkī system.

The *khushkī* or voluntary system, though more common in Sāran than in Muzaffarpur and Champāran, is comparatively unimportant. The ryot has usually no connection with the

factory, nor does he necessarily receive any advance. The factory supplies the seed, but all the cultivation is done by the ryot, who selects his own land, and when the crop is cut, is paid at the rate of about 3 annas per maund for the green plant. If the outturn reaches 100 maunds an acre, as it may easily do with fairly good cultivation, the ryot makes a net profit of between Rs. 12 and Rs. 15 after paying all expenses; his land is also benefited by the rotation of a deep-root crop with ordinary surface crops, and generally yields a good *rabi* crop in the spring after the indigo is cut. This system is not usual, as it does not pay the planters. A large outturn of plant per acre is required to give a good profit, and this can only be secured by high cultivation of lands carefully selected on a sound system of rotation, elements which are *primâ facie* more likely to be present in a system of direct cultivation under the supervision of the factory manager and his servants.

Badlain system.

In conclusion, the system known as *badlain* or exchange of lands may be mentioned. Indigo, being a deep-root crop, exhausts the soil after two or three seasons, unless it is highly manured. On the other hand, it forms an excellent rotation crop with grain and other surface crops. Consequently, it is advantageous both to planter and to ryot for the latter to take over for a few years lands which have grown indigo for the cultivation of ordinary crops, giving in exchange an equal area of his own lands for the temporary cultivation of indigo. It is obvious that the system can only be worked successfully if the terms of the agreement are strictly kept on both sides.

FACTORIES.

The following list of the indigo factories at work in the district with their outworks has been supplied by the Collector.

SUBDIVISION.	FACTORIES.	OUTWORKS.
CHAPRA	Rāmkolā.	......
GOPALGANJ	Maniāra	Sipaiyā.
	Rājāpatti	Pakri.*
	Sadoā	Shāhpur.
SIWAN	Bānsapāli.	......
	Chakiā	Jagdīspur.
	Gopālpur.	......
	Jogāpur	Chauki.
		Kahalā.†
		Madhupur.†
	Partābpur	Bankath.
		Ratasiā.
	Zamāpur.	......

* In Chaprā. † In Gopālganj

CHAPTER X.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

Development of communications. BOUNDED as it is on three sides by great rivers, Sāran, till within a comparatively recent period, occupied a position of isolation ill befitting its great resources, its teeming population, and its agricultural wealth, while its means of internal communication were little less backward. There were no canals and no railways; the existing roads were not nearly sufficient in number for the wants of the people; and the utility of those which did exist was much impaired by the fact that many of them were unbridged. In earlier times these defects were still more pronounced. In 1794 there were only three roads in the district, and all in very bad condition. These were the road from Chaprā to Champāran *viâ* Mashrak and Sattar Ghāt, which was hardly passable in the rains, people being obliged to wade up to the waist in water at several parts; that from Chaprā to Muzaffarpur *viâ* Rewā Ghāt, which was scarcely passable; and that from Chirānd to Mānjhi *viâ* Godnā, which was also impassable in many places owing to the want of bridges. In 1800 the Collector reported that this last road was the only one in the district; it was repaired partly by the zamīndārs and partly by convict labour, and was, he said, "well calculated for every description of carriage." Bridges, however, were still practically non-existent, for in 1815 we find the Collector writing that he knew of only one bridge worthy of notice in the district, at Baraulī on the Dāhā.

In 1830 the following main roads were in existence—(1) Chaprā to Daraulī; (2) Chaprā to Salīmpur Ghāt and Gobindganj; (3) Chaprā to Sattar Ghāt; (4) Chaprā to Rewā Ghāt; (5) Chaprā to Sonpur; (6) Chaprā to Sherpur Ghāt, the direct route to Dinapore; and (7) Chaprā to Gorakhpur *viâ* Siwān and Baragāon. These roads were, the Collector reported, to be considered more in the light of military roads and were "all good." This description, however, appears to have been somewhat euphemistic in the light of the following account of the roads of Sāran given in the Bengal and Agra Gazetteer of 1841. "Good roads are much wanted in the district; those in the vicinity of the station of

Chaprā are kept in repair by the Magistrate, and those in the interior by the zamīndārs, whose system is attended altogether with very bad consequences. The great road from Chaprā to Gorakhpur *viâ* Daraulī is wretchedly bad; that leading to Gorakhpur *iâ* Baragāon is not much better, and in many places so narrow as scarcely to admit wheeled carriages, besides having deep ditches on each side. On this road several bridges are much required, more particularly across the nullah at Siwān-Alīganj, where a ferry boat plies in the rains, and many accidents occur. These remarks also apply to the Gobindganj and Bettiah roads. From Chaprā to the eastward as far as Sonpur, a distance of about 30 miles, the roads are in excellent repair, and passable for wheeled carriages nearly the whole year. To Chirānd and Sherpur Ghāt on the Ganges, the direct route to Patna and Dinapore, the roads are very good. The road leading to Rewā Ghāt on the Gandak, which is the road to Tirhut, is of considerable importance, and a very little expense would keep it in good repair throughout the year. The road leading to Sattar Ghāt on the Gandak, which is the high road to Champāran, is hardly passable in many places for five or six months in the year. The cross roads from one village to another are in a few instances repaired by the zamīndārs, and if the high roads are indifferent in many parts of Sāran, the cross roads are wholly neglected."

The famine of 1874 gave a great stimulus to road-making and numerous new roads were constructed, while existing highways were raised and improved. Still, in 1877, when the Statistical Account of Bengal was published, it was stated that, with the exception of some short detached lengths in the vicinity of towns, all the roads were unmetalled, and their chief defect was a want of bridges, many having been swept away in the flood of 1871. The introduction of the Road Cess Act in 1875 placed the District Road Fund on a satisfactory basis and enabled bridges to be built and repaired, besides a finish being given to much rough earthwork which remained after the famine year; and in 1884 the Bengal and North-Western Railway was opened throughout the south-western portion of the district. Since that time, there has been steady progress in extending and improving the roads, building bridges, replacing old wooden bridges with masonry erections, and providing more waterways and better drainage. The length of district roads has been increased to 1,205 miles and of village roads to 1,419 miles, or approximately one lineal mile of road to every superficial square mile. The district also contains altogether 116 miles of railway, for besides the main line of the Bengal and North-Western Railway, there are branch lines from Chaprā to

Mānjhi, from Duraundhā to Mahārājganj, and from Siwān to Thāwe, as well as a loop line from Sonpur to Banwār Chak. There are now few places which are not easily accessible at all times of the year, and the result has been not only to develop trade, but also to minimize the liability of Sāran to famine.

RAILWAYS. The main line of the Bengal and North-Western Railway runs through Sāran for 81 miles from a little beyond Mairwā in the north-west to Sonpur in the south-east. Beyond Mairwā the line passes into the Gorakhpur district of the United Provinces and runs on for another 61 miles to Gorakhpur; and at Sonpur the magnificent Gandak bridge links it with the whole of the Tirhut State Railway system (now worked by the Bengal and North-Western Railway), through which again it is connected with Northern and Eastern Bengal. A branch line, the Revelganj-Ballia branch, runs for 11 miles from Chaprā *viâ* Revelganj to Mānjhi, where a steam ferry across the Gogrā establishes connection with Benāres. From Banwār Chak to Sonpur there is a short loop line, passing Pahlezā Ghāt on the Ganges, where a steam ferry plies to and from Dīgha in the Patna district; thence a short branch line completes through communication with the East Indian Railway at Bankipore.

The main line, which is the property of a private company, was constructed between November 1881 and January 1884. It has developed a large goods traffic, both local and from points beyond the Sāran district, and at certain seasons of the year, especially at the time of the Sonpur fair, its passenger traffic is phenomenal. The opening of this line and the construction of feeder roads by the District Board have been of very great benefit to the district, for, besides the usual advantages of improved communication and the development of trade, they have done much to mitigate the severity of famine. The railways in the district have recently been extended by the construction of lines from Siwān to Thāwe and from Duraundhā to Mahārājganj; a survey has also been made for a line from Chaprā to Mashrak.

ROADS. The roads of Sāran may be divided into two categories, either according to their construction, as metalled or unmetalled, or according to their importance, as main or village roads. Of metalled roads the district has comparatively few, their aggregate length being only about 150 miles. The macadamizing material used on them is nodular limestone (*kankar*), which is found in many places in the district. The small lumps of *kankar* are carefully packed so as to form a level surface; water is then poured over it, and the surface rolled or beaten down with rammers. When properly consolidated, it forms an excellent metalling. The

great cost of keeping these roads in a state of efficiency, under the heavy cart traffic which they have to carry, and the large number of unmetalled roads, which demand maintenance and repair, have led the District Board of Sāran for some time past to abandon further efforts to extend their metalled system and to devote all available funds to improving existing unmetalled communications, especially in extending, widening, raising and bridging them. The cart traffic of the district is very great, though it has somewhat diminished since the railway has been opened, and all efforts directed to the improvement of the unmetalled roads are a direct benefit to the poorer classes. The best kind of unmetalled roads consist of a raised road in the centre for light wheeled traffic, horsemen and pedestrians, with a grass berm on each side; outside these, on one or both sides, is a cart track for heavy wheeled vehicles, and beyond these again the borrow pits, whence earth is taken for the repairs of the road. It is a district custom of long standing that heavy wheeled traffic should be confined to the lower cart tracks so long as they are passable; and owing to the great volume of traffic, the friability of the soil, and the immense length of roads to be kept in repair, any other system would severely strain the resources of the District Board.

Turning to the classification according to importance, it should be explained that all the principal roads of the district, entered in a carefully prepared list and known as district roads, are under the direct control of the District Board, whilst smaller roads, including the tracks from village to village called village roads, are subject to the administration of the Local Boards in the Siwān and Gopālganj subdivisions and of the District Board in the headquarters subdivision. The total length of district roads in existence in 1906-07 was 1,205 miles and of village roads 1,419 miles. The upkeep of all the main roads and all original construction work on village roads requiring engineering knowledge are in the hands of the District Engineer, who is assisted by an Overseer for each of the three subdivisions, these again being subdivided into six sections each in charge of a Sub-Overseer. Besides this staff, each Local Board has one Sub-Overseer of its own for employment on the village roads under its control. Repairs are usually carried out by contractors, and in this respect valuable assistance is rendered by European indigo planters, who undertake the supervision of the roads near their factories. Most of the main roads near the principal towns and villages are already shaded with fine trees, and the plantation of others is steadily progressing. Road demarcation also has been actively taken up, as it has been found that, unless this is

thoroughly done, encroachments are frequent and most detrimental to the interests of the public. The operation is effected either by erecting boundary pillars or stones, or by planting trees, for which purpose the common *tāl* or palm tree is especially suitable, as it is inexpensive, hardy, does not appreciably overshadow the neighbouring fields, and is not browsed down by cattle. Where the road passes through villages and bazars, its limits are defined by masonry drains on either side.

The main roads in Sāran group themselves naturally into the Chaprā and the Siwān systems, these two principal towns being the *foci* of administration and trade in their respective neighbourhoods. From Chaprā seven great roads radiate, the termini, with two exceptions, being *ghāts* or ferries on one or other of the great rivers which bound the district on three sides. (1) The first of these highways is the Sonpur road, 33¼ miles in length, which runs in a general south-easterly direction through Dighwārā to Sonpur, at the junction of the Gandak and the Ganges, famous for its shrine and great fair. A ferry and the Gandak bridge connect it with Hājīpur in the Muzaffarpur district, and a steam ferry also plies to and from Patna. The road is in many places very low, and is liable to be submerged by inundation from the Ganges. (2) The Rewā Ghāt road, 24¾ miles, runs east-north-east through Garkhā, where there is a police outpost, and past Jalālpur and Makair, to Rewā Ghāt on the Gandak. (3) The Sohānsi Ghāt road, 30 miles, leaves Chaprā in a north-easterly direction, and passing through Mirzāpur, terminates at Sohānsi on the Gandak south-east of Siwān. (4) The Sattar Ghāt road, 35¼ miles, runs almost due north to the Gandak, and is one of the most important roads in the district, connecting it with the southernmost portion of the Champāran district. This road for many miles passes through low *chaurs*, and until it was raised and metalled, was constantly damaged by floods. (5) The Salīmpur Ghāt road, 51 miles, leads due north from Chaprā to the important ferry of Salīmpur on the Gandak opposite Gobindganj, through which most of the traffic from Nepāl and Champāran passes into Sāran and Gorakhpur. (6) The Chaprā-Siwān road, 39½ miles, skirts the railway, as far as Ekmā, 18 miles, where it bifurcates, one branch going north to the important mart of Mahārājganj, and thence by a less used route to Salīmpur Ghāt *viâ* Baraulī, while the other, still running parallel to the railway, passes on to Siwān. Until the construction of the railway, this latter road was one of the principal trade routes in Sāran, but it has now lost much of its importance. (7) The Chaprā-Guthnī road, 54 miles, skirts

the left bank of the river Gogrā, and passes through Mānjhi and Daraulī. It also serves several ferries on the Gogrā between Sāran and the districts of Ballia and Azamgarh in the United Provinces.

The Siwān system consists of eight principal roads. (1) The Siwān-Chaprā road, 39½ miles, has already been described. (2) The Siwān-Mahārājganj road leads south-east for 12 miles to the important market last named, and thence continues in the same direction to Rewā Ghāt, 39 miles, and to Sonpur, 52 miles, thus crossing the roads of the Chaprā system numbered 2 to 6, and joining No. 1 at Dighwārā. (3) The Siwān-Sohāgpur Ghāt road, 39 miles, runs a little south of east and passes through the Basantpur and Mashrak police stations. (4) The Siwān-Sattar Ghāt road, 35½ miles, runs north-east for 10 miles to Barhariā, to avoid marshy and low land, and thence east to Sattar Ghāt by a route necessarily devious for the same reason. (5) The Siwān-Salīmpur Ghāt road is identical, as far as Barhariā, with the road last described, and thence runs through the Baraulī police outpost to Salīmpur Ghāt, 15 miles. (6) The Siwān-Gopālganj road, 20 miles, which is metalled throughout, passes through Mīrganj, whence Hathwā is distant only 2½ miles. From Mīrganj it passes on to the north-west, and leads to the outlying parts of the Siwān and Gopālganj subdivisions and the boundary outposts of the district. (7) The Siwān-Guthnī road, 22 miles, *viâ* Mairwā, runs due west from Siwān till it reaches the Sāran border, which it follows southward, joining road No. 7 of the Chaprā system at Guthnī. (8) The Siwān-Andar road goes due south from Siwān to the large village of Andar, 9 miles, where it bifurcates, one branch going to Narhan Ghāt on the Gogrā and the other to Daraulī on the same river.

These two lists by no means exhaust the important roads of the Sāran district, for while their main lines are from north to south, many useful roads, which do not touch either Siwān or Chaprā, cross the district from east to west and supply lateral communication. Such are the Domaigarh-Mashrak road, which runs through Ekmā and Tājpur and connects the Gandak and the Gogrā; and the Daraulī-Basantpur road, which starting from the Chaprā-Guthnī road, two miles below Daraulī, passes through Andar, Husainpurā, Duraundhā and Mahārājganj to Basantpur.

Of the village roads no description is possible. They form a perfect reticulation between the main arterial highways, and range from the well-planned road, hardly differing but in name from the main road, to the winding track from village to village, which the cattle first made, the villagers widened, and an

energetic Magistrate at last decided to maintain. With so many excellent routes piercing the district in all directions, there were few points on the railway, which were not already served by existing roads when it was opened. A few stations, however, remained, which though admirably placed as regards the traffic to be carried and the convenience of passengers, were not provided with satisfactory means of communication with the interior of the district. For these places several new roads have already been constructed, others are being constructed, and it is the policy of the District Board, as opportunity offers, to provide every station with a good metalled approach.

Numerous important ferries cross the Ganges, Gandak and Gogrā rivers, and maintain communication with the neighbouring districts. The principal ferries on the Ganges are from Pahlezā to Kurjī in Patna, from Pānāpur to Nāsriganj in the same district, from Doriganj to Bingāwān in Shāhābād, and from Telpā to Ekaunā. On the Gogrā those most used are from Revelganj to Chhakutolā, from Mānjhi to Chak Diāra, from Domaigarh to Gopālnagar in Ballia, and from Daraulī to Gosainpur in the same district. On the Gandak there are four important ferries leading to places in Muzaffarpur, viz., from Thahrā-Harinbādhā to Rewā, from Barwe and Darihārā to Basantā, from Hasanpur-Baniā to Sohāgpur, and from Sārangpur-Saguni to Sohānsi; and there are three principal ferries to places in Champāran, viz., from Dumariā to Rāmpurwā, from Salīmpur to Gobindganj, and from Sattar Ghāt to Dhekahā. Ferries.

There are dāk bungalows at Chaprā, Siwān and Gopālganj, and inspection bungalows at Baniāpur, Baragāon, Basantpur, Bhori, Daraulī, Dighwārā, Doriganj, Ekmā, Gopālpur, Hardiā, Jalālpur, Kuchai Kot, Mahārājganj, Mairwā, Mashrak, Siswān, Siwān and Sonpur. Staging bungalows.

The Ganges, Gogrā and Gandak have from time immemorial been highways for boat traffic, which is still considerable in spite of the railway competition. The India General Steam Navigation Company has a daily steamer service up and down the Ganges and Gogrā throughout their course along this district, starting from Dīgha Ghāt in the district of Patna, nearly opposite Sonpur, with a terminus at Ajodhyā, a sacred place of pilgrimage on the Gogrā in the Faizābād district of Oudh. These steamers carry both goods and passengers, and thousands proceed by this route down the Ganges to Eastern Bengal in search of employment, the steamers running in connection with others which ply between Patna and Goalundo, and there connect with the Assam-Cāchār line. The extension of the Bengal and WATER COMMUNICATIONS.

North-Western Railway from Hājīpur to Katihār has, however, already largely affected this traffic, and multitudes now go by train who a few years ago walked or went by steamer. The Dāhā and Māhī rivers are also navigable by country boats of 400 or 500 maunds burden during the rainy season. The former river was until recent years navigable by large boats as far as Siwān all the year round, except in very dry years; but the damming up of the stream for purposes of irrigation and the increase of cultivation of *boro* rice in its bed have caused it to silt up to a large extent. In the rains boats of considerable burden are painfully forced up other local streams to an astonishing distance and return with large cargoes, but the trade thus carried is small and hardly appreciable in comparison with that which follows the railway and roads.

Boats.

There are several kinds of boats in general use on the Sāran rivers. The larger boats are the *ulānk*, which has a long narrow bow overhanging the water, the *melhni*, which has a broad bluff bow, and the *pataili* (also called in Sāran *katrā*), a broad-beamed boat drawing but little water, the sides of which are formed of planks overlapping each other—in other words, it is clinker-built. Among smaller boats may be mentioned the ordinary *dingi*, and the *pansuhi*, which has a round bottom but can ply in shallow water.

POSTAL STATISTICS.

There are 592 miles of postal communication in the district, and 79 post offices have been opened, representing one post office for every 34 square miles. In 1906-07, 2,655,614 postal articles were delivered, including 1,280,708 letters and 1,189,422 post-cards. The value of money orders issued in the same year was Rs. 12,03,540 and of those paid Rs. 44,56,492; these figures sufficiently attest the popularity of this means of transmitting money. Altogether, 4,780 accounts have been opened in the Savings Bank, the amount deposited being Rs. 1,94,488. Besides the telegraph office at Chaprā, there are 15 postal-telegraph offices situated at Baniāpur, Chainpur, Dighwārā, Ekmā, Gopālganj, Hathwā, Jāmo Bazar, Mahārājganj, Mairwā, Mashrak, Nagrā, Ramkolā, Revelganj, Siwān and Sonpur.

CHAPTER XI.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

REVENUE HISTORY. Early settlements.

THE first settlement of Sāran,* of which there is any authentic record, was made in 1582 by Todar Mal, the Finance Minister of Akbar. Sāran then contained 17 *parganas* and was assessed to a revenue of Rs. 4,04,300, the area measured and assessed being only 415 square miles. It is noticeable that at this time less than a fifth of the district had been brought under cultivation, and that the incidence of land revenue was Re. 1-8 per productive acre, which is exactly double what it is at the present day. This assessment was revised in 1685 during the reign of Aurangzeb, when the revenue was nearly doubled, being raised to Rs. 8,01,461; a large part of the increase was, no doubt, due to the extension of cultivation during the century, but in the absence of statistics of area it is impossible to say how much was actually assessed on newly cultivated land. A considerable area was, moreover, appropriated to form *jāgīrs* or revenue-free grants for the purpose of remunerating the civil and military officers of the Empire, over whom the central authorities had but little control. This assessment remained unaltered until 1750, when Alī Vardi Khān, then Governor of Bihār, made a fresh assessment, the chief object of which appears to have been to incorporate with the land revenue a number of *ābwābs* or unauthorized cesses, which, though nominally abolished by Akbar, were still in existence. By this assessment the revenue demand was raised to Rs. 9,29,856; but this total included a considerable sum which was paid to the revenue collecting officials by way of *jāgīrs*, etc., and never reached the Government. A further readjustment was, therefore, undertaken in 1765 to separate the Government demand from that appropriated for the purpose of *jāgīrs* and religious and charitable endowments. The result was to reduce the demand to Rs. 8,80,233, representing an assessment of annas 9-1 per acre, this being the highest rate of assessment in North Bihār.

* The district, as now constituted, corresponds almost exactly with *Sarkār* Sāran, one of the six *Sarkārs* forming the *Sūbah* or Province of Bihār, except that one small *pargana* forms part of Gorakhpur.

EARLY BRITISH ADMINISTRATION. When the East India Company acquired the *Dīwāni* of Bengal, Bihār and Orissa, the collection of land revenue was at first left entirely to a native agency, for the Council considered it doubtful whether the European servants generally possessed sufficient knowledge of the civil institutions and interior state of the country to qualify them for the trust. After four years of this system, it was found necessary to appoint European Supervisors to control the native subordinates in the collection of revenue and the administration of civil justice; and in 1770 a Revenue Council was formed for Bihār, with its headquarters at Patna, for the purpose of supervising the Supervisors. The latter were instructed to make enquiries and report on every detail concerning the interior economy of the country and the mode of levying the land revenue; and it was soon found that the system of leaving the tax-collectors uncontrolled had led to gross abuses. The assessment was nominally based on that of 1765, and though the financial results in Sāran were excellent, over 80 per cent. of the demand being realized, it was reported that the Nāzims or native collectors "exacted what they could from the zamīndārs and the great farmers of the revenue, whom they left at liberty to plunder all below, reserving to themselves the prerogative of plundering them in their turn when they were supposed to have enriched themselves with the spoils of the country." Accordingly, in 1772 the office of Naib Dīwān or head native revenue collector was abolished, and the Company's officers themselves took over the collection of the revenue, the Supervisors being called Collectors for the first time and placed under the control of a Board of Revenue in Calcutta. This new departure, however, was not a success, and it was therefore decided to settle the revenue by farming out the collections for five years to the highest bidders. This experiment was equally unsuccessful, for the farmers failed to carry out their obligations, and great loss resulted. To remedy this state of affairs, the European agency was again abolished in 1774, and the revenue collections were entrusted to agents called *āmils* working under a Provincial Council at Patna.

The Company had by this time realized that it was necessary to obtain a fuller knowledge of the state of the country before a satisfactory assessment and a satisfactory method of collecting it could be devised. With this object *āmils* were deputed with instructions to make the minutest enquiries as to "whatever might enable them to procure the most exact information of the real produce or value of the lands." Annual settlements were made by the Provincial Council in the years 1777-80, based on the result of the enquiries made under these somewhat vague

instructions, and the revenue continued to be collected by native agency; but the only result was a gradual and steady diminution in the Company's revenue, and in 1781 the system was again altered, the Provincial Council being abolished. Districts were now placed in charge of Collectors, who were subordinate to the Presidents of the abolished Councils; the latter were in turn subject to the control of the Committee of Revenue in Calcutta; and something like the modern system of administration was thus introduced.

The first authentic record of the revenue demand under British rule is found in the register of Nawāb Hoshiyār Jang, Sūbahdār of Bihār, from which it appears that in 1773 the district of Sāran, then known as *Sarkār* Sāran, comprised 1,640 estates, 15 *parganas* and 4,650 villages, of which 297 villages were revenue-free, the revenue demand for the remainder being Rs. 9,36,201. The collections were, however, very much less, and varied greatly from year to year, both because of the constant changes made in the systems of administration, and of the inherent defects of those systems, and also because the district suffered severely from famines, such as those of 1770 and 1783, and from floods. The Gandak embankment had fallen into disrepair, and was not restored till 1796. Meanwhile, the north and east of the district were swept by floods nearly every year. In the Husepur zamīndāri, corresponding with the present Hathwā Rāj estate, no one could be got to take up a settlement of the revenue; and it is reported that in one year three-fourths of the cattle perished.

To add to the difficulties of the Company's officials, it was impossible to collect the revenue in a large portion of the district, owing to the recusancy of the leading zamīndārs. The ancestors of the Chainpur Bābus steadily refused to pay Government dues, and the Hathwā Rāj was practically in a state of anarchy owing to the rebellion of Fateh Sāhi. His estate was let out to farmers, but he frustrated their attempts to collect the revenue; and the Collector, finding it impossible to realize anything, recommended that he should be pardoned and given an allowance on promising to live quietly at Husepur. This promise the Rājā readily gave and as readily broke. He again took the field, and a series of outrages culminated, in 1775, in the murder of his own cousin Basant Sāhi. Government then declared his property forfeit, but eventually recognized Chhattardhāri Sāhi, the infant grandson of the murdered Basant Sāhi as the owner of the estate. An idea of the deficiency of revenue thus caused may be gathered from a report submitted in 1787 by

Mr. Montgomerie, the Collector, in which he remarked :—"Though a richer and better cultivated district than *Sarkār* Sāran is not to be seen in India, the Collector has never been able to realize the revenue of a single year from what should be deemed the resources of the country. A remission of the revenue was granted by the Collectors every year." Though the demand from 1780 to 1789 was over nine lakhs, the collections rarely amounted to much more than half of that sum, and were sometimes considerably less.

Decennial settlement. In 1791 the decennial settlement was carried out. The unit of this settlement was the estate and not the village; enquiries were made to ascertain for each estate the gross produce including both cash and produce rents, and *sairāt* paid for fisheries, orchards, grazing land and the like, from which were deducted temple charges, etc., and an allowance of 10 per cent. left to the proprietors. The revenue assessed at this settlement was Rs. 9,29,261 payable by 959 estates. The total was almost the same as that of the latest Mughal settlement of 1765 and was more than double that of Todar Mal, but the area assessed had increased nearly six-fold since 1582. The 959 estates in the district were settled with 355 proprietors, of whom the more important was Jag Mohan Mukherji, the farmer of the Hathwā estate, whose revenue amounted to Rs. 1,39,209; the Narayans, ancestors of the present Chainpur family, whose revenue was Rs. 94,098; and the Mānjhi Bābus, with a revenue of Rs. 75,525.

Permanent Settlement. This settlement was confirmed in 1793 with some modifications, due to its being checked by the actual collections for 1791. The result was that the total revenue permanently settled was Rs. 10,27,110 and the number of estates permanently settled was 1,818. The fact that the Permanent Settlement was made with the zamīndārs or hereditary proprietors of the land, and not as elsewhere with middlemen and tax-collectors, is evident from a report of the Collector, in which he said :—"The only instances in *Sarkār* Sāran, where the immediate zamīndārs have not been treated with, are Husepur and Chaubāra. The zamīndārs of these places have long been dispossessed by order of Government." The zamīndār of Husepur was the notorious rebel Fateh Sāhi, whose estates were declared forfeit and were shortly afterwards settled with the representatives of another branch of the Hathwā family. The zamīndār of Chaubāra also had been dispossessed for assisting Fateh Sāhi, and his estates were subsequently settled with his brother. It is thus clear that in Sāran the Permanent Settlement

did not result in the creation of a new landed class, but was made entirely with the old landed proprietors of the country.

RESUMPTION PROCEEDINGS.

The next important event in the revenue history of Sāran was the resumption of revenue-free properties. It had been found that many villages or blocks of land had escaped settlement and were held free of revenue under invalid title. After a lengthy enquiry, the Collector submitted a report in 1834 estimating that 1,455 *mahāls*, covering an area of about 156,063 *bīghas*, were liable to come under resumption; and it appears from his report that the existing revenue was then Rs. 10,37,509, or about Rs. 10,000 more than the revenue settled permanently in 1793; this increase was probably due to the resumption of some petty estates prior to the general resumption proceedings concluded in 1841. No final report of those proceedings is available, but a Persian register purporting to give the results of all the resumptions under Regulation II of 1819 shows that 240,324 *bīghas* were resumed and assessed at Rs. 1,32,467. Adding this to the revenue reported by the Collector, we find that the Government revenue in 1841 was Rs. 11,69,976.

SURVEYS AND SETTLEMENTS.

This was followed by the great revenue survey of 1843-44, which was necessitated by the constant disputes regarding the boundaries of estates and villages, due to the Permanent Settlement having been effected without any specification of boundaries. The result of the revenue survey was to raise the revenue to Rs. 12,34,388. Some years after this, it was realized that a fresh survey of *diāra* areas was necesssary owing to rivers having changed their courses since the revenue survey; and in 1863 Government gave orders for a minute survey of the conterminous villages on both banks of the rivers Ganges, Gogrā and Gandak to show the changes which had taken place. The effect of this survey was to reduce the revenue by Rs. 4,255. In 1882-83, when a cadastral survey was in progress in the districts of Ghāzipur and Ballia in the United Provinces, the opportunity was taken to make a fresh survey of the Ganges and Gogrā *diāras*, which were gradually brought under settlement on the expiry of the terms of the adjoining temporarily-settled estates. These settlements only affected small areas, and it was not till 1893 that a survey of the district was taken in hand. This was followed by a settlement of the entire district, an operation of great magnitude, which was concluded in 1903.

ESTATES.

At the time of the permanent settlement there were 1,818 estates in the district, with a demand of Rs. 10,27,110. According to the returns for 1906-07, the number has now risen to 5,655, paying a land revenue of Rs. 12,67,055, of which 5,539 with a

demand of Rs. 12,33,541 are permanently settled, 77 paying Rs. 14,954 are temporarily settled, and 39 paying Rs. 18,560 are held direct by Government. Partition has not proceeded to the same lengths as in the district of Muzaffarpur, and, as pointed out by the Settlement Officer, it is significant that in the 25 years ending in 1900-01 only 345 estates were affected by partition proceedings and only 1,258 new estates created—a fact which goes to show that the subdivision of estates in Sāran is reaching its limit.

Private partitions have, however, been common outside the area held by a few large zamīndārs, and proprietary rights have been subdivided to a most extraordinary extent. Even when only one estate is borne on the revenue roll, there are frequently a number of private partitions, the land comprised in it being divided into numerous *pattis* or shares. The extent to which the subdivision of proprietary rights has gone on in this way will be realized from the fact that the average area belonging to each proprietor is only about 14 acres. There is, in fact, a vast army of landlords, ranging from the Hathwā Rāj in the north, sole owner of over 1,000 villages, down to the peasant-proprietor of four acres. There is a regular scale, as shown in the margin, to denominate the minute interests which are often held in this manner. The smallest share, a *khanwā*, is about a 59-millionth part of the estate, and even smaller fractions are found. Thus, in the area for which preliminary records were written in the season 1895-96, it was found necessary in many cases to employ minute fractions, representing the value of a *til* or $\frac{1}{9,216,000,000}$ of 16 annas, in order to express the interests to be recorded; in the area dealt with in the attestation season of 1896-97, still smaller fractions, representing the value of a *ken* or $\frac{1}{73,728,000,000,000}$ of 16 annas, had to be employed; while resort was had to even more minute fractions in dealing with the interests to be recorded in a few villages settled in later years.

Estate	=	16	annas.
1 *anna*	=	20	*gandās.*
1 *gandā*	=	4	*kauris.*
1 *kauri*	=	3	*karānts.*
1 *karānt*	=	3	*dants.*
1 *dant*	=	20	*rens.*
1 *ren*	=	16	*parasts.*
1 *parast*	=	16	*khanwās.*

Transfer of proprietary rights. Enquiries made in the course of the settlement in over 400 selected villages showed that only 14 per cent. of the total area had been transferred by sale within 10 years, the average area covered by each transaction being 43 acres and the average price Rs. 50 an acre. Three-quarters of the transferees in Sāran belonged to the landlord class, and one-tenth were ryots, while lawyers and money-lenders formed an insignificant proportion. The reason that proprietary rights are not more freely transferred in Sāran

is, apparently, that the investor who wishes to acquire a small landed interest can get better value for his money by buying occupancy rights instead of proprietary rights. The former are secure so long as he pays his rent, whereas in the exercise of the latter he will probably be annoyed by the hindrances put in his way by numerous co-sharers, and may frequently have to pay the land revenue and other Government demands for shares other than his own, in order to prevent the property from being put up to sale for default. The inherent disadvantages of the co-proprietary system, coupled with the high value attached to occupancy right, both by custom and by legislation, have, the Settlement Officer states, resulted in the latter becoming twice as expensive to acquire as proprietary rights.

TENURES. Rent-paying tenures

From the statistics obtained at the last settlement it appears that 42 per cent. of the total area of the district is held by tenure-holders, 37 per cent. paying rent to the proprietor and 5 per cent. being held rent-free. The tenures, though numerous, are simple, for only 3 per cent. of the area held by tenure-holders is sublet by them to under-tenureholders. Large proprietors naturally create tenures most freely, and consequently tenures are most numerous in the Gopālganj subdivision, where they cover no less than 67 per cent. of the total area. The other extreme is in Sonpur, where they account for only 16 per cent. of the total area. Under-tenures, which are of little importance, are most numerous in Chaprā, Mashrak and Basantpur, where they are largely held by indigo factories. The average size of a rent-paying tenure is 36 acres.

Permanent and temporary tenures.

These tenures may be further divided into temporary and permanent, of which the former are by far the most general, no less than 95 per cent. of the area held under rent-paying tenures being given out on temporary leases. Nearly a quarter of this is held by indigo planters, who almost invariably refrain scrupulously from altering rents; but in most other cases the temporary tenure-holder is a speculator, whose sole object it is to make as much as he can out of the village during the term of his lease. There are, however, some notable exceptions to this rule, particularly in the Hathwā Rāj, the terms of whose leases prohibit their tenure-holders from tampering with rents during the continuance of the lease.

Permanent tenures are most numerous in the Siwān subdivision, but even there they form an insignificant proportion of the whole. They are mostly of ancient date, as the practice of giving *mukarari* leases has died out in recent years with the rise in the value of land. Leases of temporary tenures are mainly of

two kinds, *zarpeshgī* and *thīkā*. In the former, the lessee advances a sum of money to the proprietor, and the lease runs for a specified term of years, or until repayment of the loan with interest, whichever occurs latest. A *thīkā* is an ordinary farming lease, in which the lessee agrees to pay a fixed sum for a term of years for the privilege of collecting rent from the ryots. All leases in Mīrganj thāna are simple farming leases, and these account for 75 per cent. of the total in the Gopālganj subdivision. In the rest of the district *zarpeshgī* leases are the most numerous, because the petty proprietor, as a rule, requires an advance as a condition antecedent to granting a lease.

Rent-free tenures.

There are altogether 23,275 rent-free tenures as against 16,401 rent-paying tenures, but their average size is less than 4 acres. No less than 95 per cent. of the tenures and 89 per cent. of the land held rent-free are granted on religious grounds; these tenures are usually called *birits*, when held by Hindus, and *fakīrānās*, when held by Muhammadans. Service tenures account for only one per cent. of the total number; most of the grants of this kind consist of small patches of land which the grantees cultivate themselves. The so-called *mālikānā* tenures, which are all very old, consist of lands which the former owners of the village are allowed by the present possessors to hold in perpetuity rent-free. Their original object seems to have been an attempt on the part of a new purchaser to secure the favour of the original owners and to prevent any obstruction on their part. They have no connection with *mālikānā* payments made by Government and do not affect the Government revenue in any way.

RYOTS.

Ryots at fixed rates.

The number of ryots holding at fixed rates of rent is very small and the area held by them inconsiderable, there being only 2,744 holdings of this class, covering 0·34 per cent. of the occupied area; the average size of the holding (3·4 acres) is however comparatively large, being more than double the size of other ryoti holdings. Many of these holdings in Mānjhi, as also to a certain extent in Siwān and other thānas, are what are known as *bhekhbirits*, *i.e.*, rent-free lands resumed and assessed at a low rate of rent fixed in perpetuity. The original grants were made to fighting men, and as a rule *bhekhbirits* are found along what were in old days the frontiers of two hostile families, viz., Hathwā and Majhauli in the case of Siwān, and Chainpur and Mānjhi in the case of Mānjhi.

Settled and occupancy ryots.

The great majority of the tenants are settled or occupancy ryots. The number of holdings of this class is 690,386 or more than 84 per cent. of the total number of occupied agricultural holdings, while 83·91 per cent. of the occupied area of the district

is held by ryots with occupancy rights. The average size of the holding is 1·67 acres; but it should be explained that the holding comprises only each separate parcel of land held under one landlord, and not the entire area on which the family depends for subsistence. The family may, and very often does, hold land under two or three landlords; and where proprietary interests are so minute as in Sāran, it frequently happens that a cultivator holds land both as a proprietor and as a ryot in the same village, or may have several different holdings under the same status.

Transfer of occupancy rights.

Special enquiries were made during the settlement proceedings regarding the transfer of occupancy rights during a period of 10 years. It was found that in the decade 15·6 per cent. of the holdings were transferred, but only 0·31 per cent. were transferred by sale, apparently because the competition for land is keen, holdings are small, and if the ryot needs money, he dare not sell his holding, and thus deprive himself of the means of livelihood. Another noticeable fact elicited by these enquiries is that land in Sāran, whether sold or mortgaged, commands more than double the price obtainable in Champāran and Muzaffarpur; the high value of occupancy rights in Sāran, in spite of the comparatively high rent rate, shows that those rights are better understood and more appreciated than elsewhere. Further, while 41 per cent. of the transferees in Champāran were professional money-lenders, the proportion in Sāran was only 9 per cent., and no less than 84 per cent. of the total number of transfers were transactions between ryots.

"There are," writes Mr. Kerr, "certainly no indications in Sāran, such as we found in Champāran, that the professional money-lending class is taking advantage of the impoverishment of the cultivators to deprive them of their occupancy rights; and despite the fact of the very large number of transfers in Sāran and that nearly 9 per cent. of the total ryoti area of the district is affected by them, I do not think that the situation need give rise to any serious uneasiness. The average area affected by its transfer is only a little over half an acre as against an acre in Muzaffarpur and more than two acres in Champāran. There is every indication that the record-of-rights in Sāran, by increasing the ryot's knowledge of the value of his rights, will strengthen his tendency to withstand the temptation to part with them outright, and will still further induce him to raise what money he requires by short-term mortgages; and so long as this condition of things prevails, coupled with the fact that the vast majority of the transfers take place between ryots, no serious injury to the agricultural class as a whole need be

anticipated. Like all Bihāris, the Sāran ryot is improvident and wasteful beyond his means in religious and social ceremonies, and a good deal of his indebtedness is doubtless due to this. But in the south of the district, at all events, a large part of the mortgages on land are for short terms, and are due to causes to which the most rigid moralist or economist could take little exception. The land can no longer support the population, and in most families some of the young men must, and do go forth to seek their living elsewhere. In order to give these a start in life, it is quite a common thing for the family to raise Rs. 50 by mortgaging half or so, and in a few years' time the mortgage is redeemed from the remittances which the emigrant sends home."

Regarding the transferability of occupancy rights, he remarks:—"Though landlords will, as a rule, deny that holdings can be sold without their consent, and though there are a few rulings of the Civil Courts to the same effect, there can be no doubt that the custom of transferability without reference to the landlord is rapidly spreading, and that the landlords are not strong enough, or at any rate make little attempt, to resist it. The Hathwā Rāj, it is true, is still strong enough to exercise its prerogative of refusing to recognize transfers which are objectionable to it, and it affects to treat the entry of transferees in its rent-roll as a new settlement of the holding. Most indigo factories too follow the example of the Rāj in refusing power to recognize transfers to the local village agency, and requiring them to be reported to the Manager for sanction. Elsewhere, however, there is very little pretence that the landlord's sanction is required to validate a transfer of occupancy rights, and the transferee can get his name entered in the *jamābandi* by the *patwāri* in the village on payment of a nominal *salāmi*. Many of the petty proprietors are themselves purchasers of occupancy rights, and openly assert the doctrine that these are transferable without reference to the landlord. It is true that the actual number of sales is smaller in Sāran than elsewhere; but there would not be such an enormous number of mortgages, nor would such a high rate per acre be realized, unless mortgagees were certain that they would have no practical difficulty in foreclosing, in case of their debtor's default."

Non-occupancy ryots. Non-occupancy ryots are very few in number; they account for only 1·48 per cent. of the holdings and for 1·13 per cent. of the occupied land.

Rent-free ryots. Rent-free ryots are unusually numerous, the number of their holdings being 64,722 or nearly 8 per cent. of the whole, and accounting for more than 4 per cent. of the total occupied area.

The average size of the holding is, however, very small, being only 0·89 of an acre, which may be accounted for by the fact that most of the rent-free grants were made many years ago, and each grant has now been divided into nearly as many portions as the original grantee has descendants. Moreover, in the larger holdings of this class, the bulk of the land is sublet, and a rent-free holder who does not cultivate his holding himself, was invariably treated by the Settlement Officers as a tenure-holder. They are especially numerous in the Mānjhi thāna owing to the extent to which the powerful families of that area, *i.e.*, the Chainpur and Mānjhi families, used to make grants of rent-free land by way of service tenures and charitable or religious endowments. The number of retainers employed by both families was exceptionally large, and their pay, according to the general custom of the country, consisted in the produce of rent-free lands.

Under-tenants.

Under-tenants are a class of considerable importance in this district. The number of holdings of this kind is 60,300, or 7·83 per cent. of the total number of holdings in the occupied area, while the area taken up by them is 31,813 acres, equivalent to 2·58 per cent. of the occupied area. The average size of the sub-holding (half an acre) illustrates the general fact that under-tenancies are, as a rule, due in this district to the interchange of lands between ryots for the growing of special crops. One ryot wishes to grow a little opium and has no land suitable : he promptly leases, for a year, a few *kathās* from his neighbour, who has more opium land than he can conveniently cultivate himself. The under-tenant is occasionally the same person as the original (*asal*) ryot, holding his own land on a sub-lease from the man to whom he has mortgaged it. The fortunate few who have succeeded to a large holding handed down from their forefathers find it more profitable, as a rule, to sublet than to cultivate the whole area by hired labour.

Abwābs.

An account of the rents payable by the different classes of tenants has been given in Chapter VI, and mention may be made here of various *ābwābs* or cesses which have been found in Sāran. *Tahrīr* (literally a writing fee) is levied from ryots by the *patwāri*, at rates varying from one-quarter anna to one anna for each rupee of rent, as a remuneration for writing receipts and keeping accounts ; *hisābāna*, *rasidāna*, *pharkāna* and *neg* are alternative names for this cess. *Badarat* consists of miscellaneous charges levied at half an anna to one anna in the rupee for miscellaneous favours of an indefinite kind shown or supposed to be shown by the *patwāri* to the ryot. *Beshi* is excess payment which the rent-collector appropriates. *Kharcha* or *kharcha-dehi* is a name for

collection charges realized by the landlord from the ryots at the rate of one to two annas per rupee for meeting the collection expenses of the villages. *Salāmi* is payment made to the landlord or *patwāri*, when settlement is granted, for mutation of entries effected in the *jamābandi*. *Dāk-behri* is a *dāk* cess levied at the rate of ¼ to ½ anna per rupee of rent annually payable by the ryot. *Bandh-behri* is an embankment cess levied at the rate of ¼ an anna to one anna per rupee of rent. *Pulbandhi* is an *ābwāb* rarely met with, which is realized from the ryots for the ostensible object of repairing bridges. *Kotwāli* is a small fee levied yearly from the ryots for the ostensible object of keeping up the rural police for the protection of the ryots' property from theft. *Batta* or *Batta Company* is a very common *ābwāb*, generally levied at the rate of half an anna to one anna per rupee of rent, to compensate for short weight in rupees introduced by the East India Company or in any kind of rupees in currency. In some villages even *darbattas*, *i.e.*, *battas* upon *battas*, are charged, which means a further exaction on the amount of the *batta* on the original rental for the holding. *Khunti* is an impost levied on cultivators, at 12 annas to Re. 1-4 per *bīgha*, for cultivating tobacco. *Khapta* which is similar to the above is a cess generally levied on Koiris for allowing them to raise special crops. *Dāwāt-pūjā* or the worship of the ink-pot on the 17th Kārtik is observed by all Kāyasths, who are prohibited from using pen and ink on this day; this festival is also made an occasion for realizing one or two annas per rupee from any well-to-do ryots who will pay the fee.

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Administrative charges and staff. For administrative purposes the district is divided into three subdivisions, viz., Chaprā, Gopālganj and Siwān. The Chaprā or headquarters subdivision is under the direct supervision of the Collector, while each of the other two subdivisions is in charge of a Subdivisional Officer. At Chaprā the Collector is assisted by a staff of Deputy Collectors, consisting generally of five officers, one of whom is sometimes a Joint Magistrate; in addition to this, regular staff, there is a Deputy Collector in charge of Excise and Income-tax, and also occasionally an Assistant Magistrate and one or two Sub-Deputy Collectors. The Subdivisional Officers of Gopālganj and Siwān are usually assisted by a Sub-Deputy Collector. For the administration of the Opium Department, the district constitutes a division called Alīganj, with two subdivisions, Chaprā and Alīganj Siwān each of which is under the supervision of a Sub-Deputy or Assistant Opium Agent. Under the provisions of Act XIII of 1857, the Collector is *ex-officio* Deputy Opium Agent, but in practice he takes no part in the administration of the Department.

Revenue. The revenue of the district under the main heads rose from Rs. 20,22,000 in 1880-81 (when the income-tax had not been imposed) to Rs. 22,21,000 in 1890-91, and to Rs. 25,17,000 in 1900-01. In 1906-07 it amounted to Rs. 26,52,000, of which Rs. 12,66,000 were derived from land revenue, Rs. 5,38,000 from excise, Rs. 4,16,000 from stamps, Rs. 3,71,000 from cesses and Rs. 61,000 from income-tax.

Land revenue. The collections of land revenue aggregated Rs. 12,55,000 in 1880-81, Rs. 12,49,000 in 1890-91, and Rs. 12,70,000 in 1900-01; but fell to Rs. 12,66,000 in 1906-07. In the year last named the current demand was Rs. 12,67,000 payable by 5,655 estates; Rs. 12,33,000 being due from 5,539 permanently-settled estates, Rs. 15,000 from 77 temporarily-settled estates and Rs. 19,000 from 39 estates held direct by Government. The collections of land revenue account for nearly half of the total revenue of the district.

Excise. The excise revenue increased from Rs. 3,22,741 in 1892-93 to Rs. 3,64,314 in 1900-01. Since that year there has been a steady growth in the receipts, and in 1904-05 they amounted to Rs. 4,72,514, the increase during the quinquennium being 29·6 per cent. The annual incidence of excise revenue during this period was, however, less than in any of the North Gangetic districts of the Patna Division. In 1906-07 the receipts increased to Rs. 5,38,073—a total exceeded in only two districts in the Division, viz., Patna and Gayā. The net excise revenue was Rs. 2,159 per 10,000 of the population or a little over 3 annas a head, as compared with the Provincial average of Rs. 2,523 per 10,000.

The greater portion of the excise revenue is derived from the sale of country spirit prepared by distillation from molasses and the flower of the *mahuā* tree (*Bassia latifolia*). The receipts from this source amounted in 1906-07 to Rs. 3,85,000 or more than three-fifths of the total excise revenue. The manufacture and sale of country spirit are carried on under what is known as the dual system, *i.e.*, there is a central distillery which serves Chaprā and a small area round it, and there are outstills for the supply of the rest of the district. There are 26 shops for the sale of distillery liquor and 85 shops selling outstill liquor, *i.e.*, one retail shop for the sale of country spirit to every 21,707 persons; the average consumption of the former liquor is 133 proof gallons and of the latter 74 proof gallons per 1,000 of the population. The consumption of the fermented liquor known as *tāri* is not so great, but in 1906-07 its sale brought in Rs. 68,537. Imported liquors have found no favour with the bulk of the people, both because they are unable to afford them, and also because they prefer the country spirit and *tāri* they have drunk for generations past. The receipts from both the latter represent an expenditure of Rs. 1,885 per 10,000 of the population, a figure higher than that returned by any district in the Division except Patna and Gayā.

The receipts from hemp drugs and opium account for practically all the remainder of the excise revenue. The greater part (Rs. 80,358) is derived from the duty and license fees on *gānja*, *i.e.*, the dried flowering tops of the cultivated female hemp plant (*Cannabis sativa*) and the resinous exudation on them. The consumption of hemp drugs is, however, less than in any other district in the Division except Muzaffarpur, the expenditure being Rs. 335 per 10,000 of the population, as compared with the Divisional average of Rs. 476. On the other hand, opium is not much used; in 1906-07 the duty and license fees on this drug

brought in only Rs. 2,482, representing an expenditure of Rs. 10 per 10,000 of the population, as compared with the Divisional average of Rs. 45 per 10,000.

For preventive purposes, the district is divided into several circles, each in charge of a Sub-Inspector of Excise, with a Deputy Inspector, whose duty it is to supervise the work of these subordinate officers, the whole being under the control of a Special Deputy Collector of Excise.

Stamps. The revenue from stamps ranks next in importance as a source of income to that derived from excise. The receipts from this source increased from Rs. 3,52,730 in 1896-97 to Rs. 4,16,658 in 1906-07 or by 20 per cent., the increase being due to the retransfer of the Subordinate Judge's Court of Champāran to Chaprā, where all the important original and appellate civil work of Champāran is carried on. The sale of court-fee stamps, which in 1906-07 realized Rs. 3,02,986, is by far the most important item in the receipts from judicial stamps. Among non-judicial stamps, impressed stamps account for Rs. 82,587 or nearly the whole of the receipts under this head.

Cesses. Road and public works cesses are, as usual, levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee. The current demand in 1906-07 was Rs. 3,69,088, the greater part of which (Rs. 3,67,052) was payable by 16,489 revenue-paying estates, while Rs. 2,036 were due from 70 revenue-free estates. The number of tenures assessed to cesses was 17,835 or nearly the same as the number of estates, while the number of recorded shareholders of estates and tenures was 47,318 and 16,219 respectively.

Income-tax. In 1901-02 the income-tax yielded altogether Rs. 82,168 paid by 2,941 assessees, of whom 1,724, paying Rs. 19,642, had incomes of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000. At that time the minimum income assessable was Rs. 500, but this was raised in 1903, by the Income-Tax Amendment Act of that year, to Rs. 1,000 per annum, thereby affording relief to a number of petty traders, money-lenders and clerks; and the number of assessees consequently fell in 1903-04 to 1,193, the net collections being Rs. 67,053. In 1906-07 the amount collected was Rs. 60,872 paid by 1,248 assessees. The realizations are chiefly on account of grain and money-lending, the renting of houses, and trade.

Registration. There are 9 offices for the registration of assurances under Act III of 1877. At the headquarters station (Chaprā) the District Sub-Registrar deals, as usual, with the documents presented there, and assists the District Magistrate, who is *ex-officio* District Registrar, in supervising the proceedings of the

Sub-Registrars who are in charge of the other registration offices. The average number of documents registered annually during the quinquennium ending in 1904 was 30,448 as against 29,847 in the preceding 5 years, the increase amounting to 2 per cent. The marginal statement shows the number of documents registered and the receipts and expenditure at each office in 1906.

Name.	Documents registered.	Receipts.	Expenditure.
		Rs.	Rs.
Chaprā ...	7,417	14,304	6,105
Amnaur ...	4,236	4,352	2,492
Basantpur ...	2,960	3,416	1,466
Darauli ...	2,646	3,087	1,610
Ekmā ...	2,344	2,697	1,623
Gopālganj ...	5,173	4,688	2,179
Mirganj ...	4,929	4,065	1,750
Siwān ...	5,621	5,712	2,475
Sonpur ...	1,611	1,609	1,256
Total ...	36,937	43,930	20,956

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. Civil justice.

The Civil Courts are those of the District Judge, of two Subordinate Judges, and of five Munsifs, viz., three Munsifs stationed at Chaprā and one Munsif at each of the subdivisional stations of Gopālganj and Siwān. Of late years there has been a considerable increase in the number of suits under the rent laws. The reasons for the increased litigation about title are that the settlement operations brought disputes to a head, and made it necessary for the person who lost his case before the Revenue Officer to apply to the Civil Court or forfeit his claim permanently. The reasons for the increase in rent suits are that the record of rights, which has now been prepared, affords facilities to landlords for the recovery of their rents through the Courts, and that their possession of a title-deed in the record of rights has strengthened the position of the tenants and enabled them to withstand any illegal coercion which may be practised by the landlords. Thus, the zamīndārs now have a record of rights on which they can safely rely in order to prove the relationship of landlords and tenants, whereas previously they were deterred from litigation by the fear that the papers filed by them would not be accepted by the Courts: and on the other hand, the tenants, relying on the same record, will not pay rents for which there is no legal liability, and therefore compel the landlords to resort to the Courts to prove their claims.

Criminal Justice.

Criminal justice is administered by the District and Sessions Judge, the District Magistrate and the Magistrates subordinate to him. The sanctioned staff at Chaprā consists, in addition to the District Magistrate, of four Deputy Magistrates of the first class and one Deputy Magistrate of the second or third class. Besides these officers, an Assistant Magistrate and one or two Sub-Deputy Magistrates exercising second or third class powers are

sometimes posted there. The Subdivisional Officers at Gopālganj and Siwān are almost invariably officers vested with first class powers, and are usually assisted by a Sub-Deputy Magistrate of the second class. There are also Benches of Honorary Magistrates at Chaprā, Gopālganj and Siwān.

Crime. The commonest crimes are burglary, theft, cattle lifting and rioting. In the quinquennium ending in 1904 there were more cases of rioting than in any other of the North Gangetic districts of the Patna Division except Champāran, the average being 46 per annum. The majority of these cases, however, are of a petty nature; they are generally connected with land disputes or with disputes arising out of cattle trespass or questions of irrigation. Burglaries are very frequent, 6,773 cases, or 1,355 per annum, occurring in the same quinquennium. Dacoities and robberies are comparatively rare, for though the district contains gangs of professional criminals, they make it their practice to commit their depredations in other districts as far away from their homes as possible. Infanticide is unusually common, no less than 52 cases occurring in the 10 years ending in 1905. No other district has such a record, but Shāhābād with 50 cases was nearly as bad; these two districts accounted for over half the total number of cases of infanticide in the whole Province during the decade.

Criminal castes. Sāran is the home of a criminal tribe known as Magahiyā Doms. The men are inveterate thieves and burglars, carrying on their nefairous practices with equal boldness and secrecy. They are sometimes armed with knives strapped to the fore-arm, so that the blade projects from the elbow. Their women are equally criminal, but their part is that of the spy and informer; they go out on begging expeditions, in the course of which they obtain information as to the places where money and valuables are kept. When a successful raid has been made, they secrete and dispose of the stolen property. To this end they prostitute their girls and corrupt any one who can be of use to them; and it is a common thing for outsiders to be gained over by their attractions and blandishments.

The proper surveillance of these people presents great difficulties. In Champāran, where the Magahiyā Doms are practically members of a wandering tribe, the matter was taken in hand in 1882 by the then Magistrate, Mr. Henry, and the Doms were brought together into three or four large settlements. Land was given them and a small special police force sanctioned to keep watch over them. In 1883 the reclamation of the Magahiyā Doms of Sāran was undertaken by Major Skinner, the then

District Superintendent of Police. It was found that in Sāran, owing, no doubt, to the more settled and thickly populated character of the district, these Doms were not the gipsy wanderers they were in Champāran, but that in most cases they had settled down in small family groups, each of which had attached itself to some particular village. It was deemed impracticable, or at least highly undesirable, to attempt to break up these scattered groups and to bring them together into large central settlements as had been done in Champāran. In the first place, there were no sites available, as there were in Champāran, and these would have had to be acquired at a very heavy cost to Government; in the next place, the object in view was to induce the Dom to take a settled life, and this he had already half done by squatting down with his family, sometimes for several generations, in some village which he had come to regard as his home.

It was, therefore, considered best to recognize and perpetuate these small scattered settlements; to obtain small grants of land at each place from the local zamīndārs, for cultivation by the Doms, on payment of rent in kind; to appoint a special force of police to keep watch over the settlements; and to see that the Doms paid proper attention to the cultivation of their lands. Government approved the scheme proposed, of which the salient points were:—to give the adult Doms small quantities of land in their own villages with the view of inducing them to take to agricultural pursuits and to abandon their predatory habits: to give them presents of poultry, pigs, etc., so as to give them a start in life, and to try and induce them to increase their stock to an extent which would materially assist them in earning an honest livelihood: and to find employment for them in the neighbourhood of their villages. Thanks to the energy of Major Skinner, this programme was carried out, and it is still the system in force in Sāran.

The endeavours thus made to win the Doms from their predatory habits and to induce them to take to cultivation have not hitherto met with much success, but all that has been done is, at any rate, so much to the good, and there can be no doubt but that the condition of the people and the control exercised over them are a great improvement on the state of things that formerly prevailed. Though the settlements have not succeeded in turning the Magahiyā Doms into honest cultivators, they are at least compelled to do a certain amount of work; and now that they have a fixed place of abode where they can live, it is easier to deal with those who abscond for dishonest purposes under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.

At present, the Magahiyā Doms in Sāran number a little over 1,000 and live in 57 settlements, where they cultivate 533 *bīghas*; a small portion of land held by absconders and imprisoned Doms, which would otherwise remain waste, is cultivated on the *batāi* system. Rents are usually paid to the zamīndārs in kind in the proportion of six-sixteenths of the total produce, though some allow the land to be held rent-free. A small body of police, consisting of an Inspector, 2 Head-constables and 22 constables, is maintained for the surveillance of the settlements; and there are 25 beat houses where the Doms sleep at night under police supervision, this being known as the *parāo* system. Three schools, in which Dom children are taught reading, writing, cane and basket work, have been started by the District Board at Mānjhi, Mashrak and Mirzāpur, but, as might be expected with hereditary thieves, education is not popular.

POLICE.

The marginal table shows the various thānas and police outposts in the district; Mirzāpur, it may be added, is treated as a thāna for police purposes, but not for other administrative purposes, such as the census. The police of the Siwān and Gopālganj subdivisions are each in charge of an Inspector, and there are two Inspectors for the Chaprā subdivision, the general control resting with the Superintendent of Police. The police force in 1906 consisted of a District Superintendent of Police, 7 Inspectors, 45 Sub-Inspectors, 55 Head-constables and 523 constables. The total strength of the regular police was therefore 631 men, representing one policeman to every 4·2 square miles and to every 3,818 persons. The rural force for the watch and ward of villages in the interior, which is maintained from the Chaukīdāri tax, consists of 340 *dafadārs* and 4,632 *chaukīdārs*.

SUBDIVISION.	THANA.	OUTPOST.
CHAPRA ...	Chaprā ...	Baniyāpur. Garkhā.
	Mānjhi ...	Ekmā.
	Mashrak ...	......
	Parsā ...	Mirzāpur.
	Sonpur ...	Dighwārā.
GOPALGANJ	Gopālganj ...	Barauli. Mahārānī.
	Mīrganj ...	Bhorai. Kataiya. Kuchai Kot.
SIWAN ...	Basantpur ...	Mahārājganj.
	Darauli ...	Guthnī. Raghunāthpur. Siswān.
	Siwān ...	Barhariā. Mairwā.

JAILS.

There is a district jail at Chaprā, besides subsidiary jails at Gopālganj and Siwān. The sub-jail at Gopālganj has accommodation for 15 male and 3 female prisoners, and that at Siwān for 26 males and 6 females. The jail at Chaprā has accommodation for 335 (318 male and 17 female) prisoners distributed as follows:—Barracks without separate sleeping accommodation are provided for [illegible]8 male convicts, 15 female convicts, 47 under-trial prisoners, and

5 civil prisoners; the hospital holds 20 prisoners; and there are separate cells for 8 male and 2 female convicts. The principal industries are weaving *newār*, *darīs* and carpets, oil-pressing, the manufacture of *munj* string and *munj* mats, and aloe pounding. The *newār* is supplied to the Buxar Central Jail and used there in tent-making; the mustard oil is used in the jail and also sold to the public; and the *darīs* and carpets are sold locally. *Munj* string is chiefly sold locally, and the matting both locally and also at the depôt in Calcutta. The aloe fibre is used in the jail or sold to the public.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

OUTSIDE the municipalities of Chaprā, Revelganj and Siwān, the administration of local affairs, such as the maintenance of roads and bridges, the control of ferries and pounds, the provision of medical relief, etc., rests with the District Board and with the Local Boards of Gopālganj and Siwān. The District Board, which was established in 1886, consists of 26 members. The District Magistrate is *ex-officio* member of the Board, and is invariably its Chairman; there are five other *ex-officio* members and ten are elected and ten nominated by Government. Government servants and planters predominate among the members, the former representing 26·9 per cent. and the latter 23·1 per cent. of the total number in 1905-06, while the landholding class accounted for 19·2 per cent. and pleaders and mukhtārs for 15·4 per cent. **DISTRICT BOARD.**

The average annual income of the District Board during the 10 years ending 1901-02 was Rs. 2,60,000, of which Rs. 1,60,000 were derived from rates; and during the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 it amounted to Rs. 2,56,000. In 1906-07 the opening balance was Rs. 2,00,000, and the receipts of the year aggregated Rs. 3,23,000, including Rs. 1,75,000 obtained from Provincial rates, Rs. 18,000 contributed from Provincial revenues, Rs. 12,000 realized from tolls on ferries, Rs. 6,000 from pounds, and Rs. 36,000 from the payment of deposits and advances. In Sāran, as in other districts, the road cess is the principal source of income; the incidence of taxation is light, being only 1 anna 2 pies per head of the population—a proportion lower than in any other district of the Division except Champāran and Darbhangā. The income both from pounds and ferries is a fluctuating one. In the quinquennium ending in 1899-1900 the average annual receipts from pounds were Rs. 5,400; in the next quinquennium they were Rs. 6,100, and in 1906-07 altogether Rs. 6,000 were obtained from 60 pounds leased out by the Board. Similarly, as regards ferries, the receipts averaged Rs. 13,900 per annum in the first quinquennium, and Rs. 14,000 **Income.**

in the five years ending in 1904-05, but fell to Rs. 12,000 in 1906-07.

Expenditure. The average annual expenditure during the decade ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 2,60,000, of which Rs. 1,35,000 were expended on civil works, Rs. 18,000 on medical relief and Rs. 26,000 on education. During the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 the expenditure averaged Rs. 2,52,000 per annum, and in 1906-07 it amounted to Rs. 2,97,000. By far the largest portion of the income of the District Board is spent on civil works, *i.e.*, the extension and maintenance of communications, the up-keep of staging bungalows, the construction of buildings, the provision of a proper water-supply, etc. Over Rs. 1,99,000 were spent on these objects in 1906-07, and of this sum Rs. 1,51,000 were allotted to the extension and maintenance of communications. The District Board now maintains 140 miles of metalled roads and 1,065 miles of unmetalled roads, besides a number of village tracks with an aggregate length of 1,419 miles; the cost of maintaining these roads in 1906-07 was Rs. 336, Rs. 33 and Rs. 9 per mile respectively. After civil works, education constitutes the heaviest charge on the resources of the Board, entailing in 1906-07 an expenditure of Rs. 41,000 or nearly one-seventh of the total expenditure. It maintains 9 Middle schools and 3 industrial schools and gives grants-in-aid to 2 Middle schools, 47 Upper Primary schools, 565 Lower Primary schools, and two other schools.

For the relief of sickness the Board maintains 6 dispensaries, and aids three others; and when cholera breaks out in the interior, it despatches native doctors with medicines to the affected villages. During 1906-07 the Board spent 8·4 per cent. of its ordinary income on medical relief and sanitation—a percentage higher than in any other district of the Division except Patna and Gayā.

Local Boards. There are two Local Boards constituted for the subdivisions of Siwān and Gopālganj. Formerly there was also a Local Board for the headquarters or Chaprā subdivision, but this was abolished some years ago, the somewhat unimportant functions performed by it being assumed by the District Board. The Siwān Local Board consists of 9 members, of whom two are *ex-officio* members and seven are nominated. The Gopālganj Local Board has also 9 members, of whom one is an *ex-officio* member and eight are nominated.

Municipalities. There are 3 municipalities in the district, viz., Chaprā, Revelganj and Siwān. The number of rate-payers in 1906-07 was 15,796, representing 22·1 per cent. of the total number (71,422)

of persons residing within municipal limits, as compared with the average of 18 per cent. for the whole Division. The average incidence of taxation in that year was annas 12-10 per head of the population, as against the Divisional average of annas 13-10, and varied from Re. 1-0-1 in Revelganj to annas 11-2 in Siwān.

The Chaprā Municipality, which was established in 1864, is administered by a Municipal Board consisting of 18 Commissioners, of whom 12 are elected, 5 are nominated, and one is an *ex-officio* member. The area within municipal limits is 7½ square miles, devided into 4 wards, and the number of rate-payers is 11,387, representing 24·8 per cent. of the population. The average income of the municipality during the 5 years 1895-96 to 1899-1900 was Rs. 41,100 and the expenditure was Rs. 38,700; in the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 they were Rs. 57,200 and Rs. 50,000 respectively. In 1906-07 the income aggregated Rs. 63,000, besides an opening balance of Rs. 15,000. The chief source of income is a rate on holdings assessed at 7½ per cent. on their annual value, which in that year brought in Rs. 29,000. The total incidence of taxation is annas 12-9 per head of the population. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 71,000, the principal items of expenditure being conservancy and medical relief, which accounted for 26·2 and 21·2 per cent. respectively of the disbursements. **Chaprā.**

Revelganj was constituted a municipality in 1876 and has a Municipal Board consisting of 12 Commissioners, of whom 8 are elected, 2 are nominated, and 2 are *ex-officio* members. The area within municipal limits is 4¼ square miles, including 16 *mahalās*, and the number of rate-payers is 1,813 or 18·5 per cent. of the population. The average annual income during the 5 years ending in 1899-1900 was Rs. 19,500 and the expenditure was Rs. 9,500; and in the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 they were Rs. 9,520 and Rs. 9,540 respectively. In 1906-07 the income of the municipality was Rs. 11,000, of which Rs. 6,000 were obtained from tolls on roads and ferries. Other taxes are a rate on holdings, assessed at 7½ per cent. on their annual value, which brought in Rs. 3,000. The incidence of taxation was Re. 1-0-1 per head of the population. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 12,000, the principal items being conservancy, which accounted for 20 per cent. of the disbursements, public works (16·2 per cent.) and medical relief (17·9 per cent.). **Revelganj.**

Siwān was constituted a municipality in 1869, and has a Municipal Board consisting of 10 Commissioners, of whom 6 are elected, 3 are nominated, and one is an *ex-officio* member. The **Siwān.**

area within municipal limits is 2·64 square miles, and the number of ratepayers is 2,596 or 16·4 per cent. of the population. The average annual income during the 5 years ending in 1899-00 was Rs. 10,300, and the expenditure was Rs. 8,300; and in the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 they were Rs. 11,200 and Rs. 10,200 respectively. In 1906-07 the income of the municipality was Rs. 16,600, of which Rs. 7,000 were derived from a tax on persons, assessed at one per cent. per annum according to the circumstances and property of the rate-payers, and Rs. 2,600 from a conservancy rate or latrine fee levied at 4¼ per cent. on the annual value of the holdings. The incidence of taxation was annas 11-2 per head of the population. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 10,000, the principal items being conservancy, medical relief and public works, which accounted for 32·6, 18·8 and 9·8 per cent. respectively of the disbursements.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDUCATION.

IN 1870-71 there were only 9 schools maintained or aided by Government in the district, at which 585 boys received instruction. Within the next two years there was a great development owing to the introduction of Sir George Campbell's scheme for the advancement of vernacular education, by which the grant-in-aid rules were extended to village *pāthsālās*. The result was that in 1872-73 there were altogether 228 schools attended by 5,421 pupils, besides 40 unaided Primary schools. During the next 20 years progress was rapid and sustained, and the number of schools and scholars steadily increased until the famine of 1897, the number of educational institutions in 1895-96 being 1,204 attended by 29,467 pupils. The effect of the famine will be sufficiently realized from the fact that the number of schools decreased to 847 in 1896-97 and to 779 in 1897-98, and the attendance in these two years to 22,847 and 20,813, respectively; the percentage of boys under instruction to the boys of school-going age declining from 21·1 per cent. in 1895-96 to 11·7 per cent. in 1897-98. During the last 10 years this loss has been slowly made up. In 1901-02 there were 951 schools with 26,705 pupils, and in 1906-07 the number of educational institutions of all classes was 1,024 and the number of pupils was 24,620. The falling off in the total number of pupils in the last quinquennium is attributed to a series of bad years in which disease has been prevalent, crops have been short, and great mortality has been caused by constant epidemics of plague. PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

Of the total number of schools now in existence, 823 with an attendance of 22,422 are public institutions, including 20 secondary schools, 788 Primary schools, 3 Training schools and 12 other special schools; while 201 schools attended by 2,198 pupils are private institutions. Of the total number receiving instruction 21,028 are Hindus (including 3,605 Brāhmans), 3,575 are Muhammadans, and 17 are native Christians. There is, on the average, one public school for every 7·12 villages and one private school for 29·1 villages; and there is one school, whether public or private, for every 5·7 villages. The number of girls at school is 1,293 and of boys 23,327, representing only 14·2 per cent. of the STATISTICS OF EDUCATION.

number of boys of school-going age. These figures are dismal enough, but they are confirmed by the statistics obtained at the census of 1901, according to which only 7·5 per cent. of the population (7·3 males and 0·2 females) are literate, *i.e.*, are able to read and write any language. The number of literates has increased but slightly since 1891, but persons able to read and write English have more than doubled during the decade, rising from 1,813 in 1891 to 3,969 in 1901. This increase is eloquent of the demand for English education. The inspecting staff consists of one Deputy Inspector of Schools, five Sub-Inspectors, one Assistant Sub-Inspector and 14 Inspecting Pandits.

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

There is no college in the district. There are altogether 20 secondary schools attended by 2,366 pupils, including six High schools, 3 Middle English schools and 11 Middle Vernacular schools. The High schools are attended by 1,507 pupils; one, the Zilā school at Chaprā, is maintained by Government; two are aided by it, viz., the Victoria Memorial High school at Siwān and the High school at Gopālganj; and three are unaided, viz., the Sāran Academy at Chaprā, the Collegiate School at the same place, and the Eden High school at Hathwā. All the Middle English schools receive grants-in-aid by Government. They are situated at Amnaur, Aphar, and Revelganj and have 146 pupils on the rolls. Of the Middle Vernacular schools, ten are maintained by the District Board, and one is under private management. These schools have an aggregate attendance of 713 boys.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

In 1906-07 there were 726 Primary schools for boys, including 55 Upper Primary schools, attended by 2,505 pupils, and 671 Lower Primary schools, attended by 15,879 boys and 214 girls. Of the Upper Primary schools, three are maintained by Government, 51 receive grants-in-aid, and one is unaided. Of the Lower Primary schools, 549 receive grants-in-aid, and 122 are unaided. Comparing these figures with those for 1896-97, we find that the number of Primary schools and of the boys studying in them has more than doubled, and that the number of Lower Primary schools has increased by 68, but the attendance has decreased by nearly 1,000. There are 37 night schools with a total attendance of 813; those in the towns and larger villages are reported to be used by shopkeepers and their assistants, and those in the villages by the labouring classes. The instruction given is of the most elementary kind, and it is said that any attempt to teach the students how to write letters, make up simple accounts, etc., drives them away from the schools.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS.

There are three Guru Training schools attended by 36 pupils, of which those at Chaprā and Gopālganj teach up to the Primary

standard and that at Siwān up to the Middle Vernacular standard. Among other special schools may be mentioned 4 aided Sanskrit *tols*, with 105 pupils, and 5 unaided but recognized *tols* with 212 pupils. Of these *tols* the best are said to be that at Hathwā which is maintained by the Rāj, and one at Godnā near Revelganj, maintained by Government, which was primarily intended for teaching Nyāya philosophy on the site assigned by tradition to the hermitage of Gautama, the founder of this school of thought. There are also 35 private *tols* with 307 pupils, where the teachers are orthodox Brāhman Pandits, who hold classes in their own houses, and in many cases feed the students. They teach in old-fashioned ways of their own, and do not follow the departmental standard. There are 43 private schools teaching Arabic and Persian, with 401 Muhammadan pupils, who read advanced books in these languages, and 24 Korān schools attended by 303 students. Institutions of the first class, which are generally endowed by well-to-do people, are located in private houses; while the schools intended for teaching the Korān are generally located in mosques or in the house of some pious Musalmān.

FEMALE EDUCATION. The Bihāri is peculiarly indifferent and, indeed, averse to the education of his women from purely conservative instincts; and in matters touching his social and domestic life the man of Sāran is doggedly conservative. In spite of this prejudice, some advance has been made, and there are 62 Primary schools attended by 1,042 girls; all these schools are Lower Primary schools. There are only 214 girls studying in boys' schools, a fact which sufficiently shows the unpopularity of co-education. One model girls' school has been opened, but has failed to find much favour. There are two peripatetic lady teachers, and one zanāna school has been opened at Siwān for the education of *pardānashin* women.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION. Technical education may be said to be practically non-existent, for there are only three institutions classified as industrial schools, and these are merely small schools intended for the instruction of children of the Magahiyā Doms, whose ostensible occupation is basket-weaving, but who are, in fact, hereditary thieves. At these schools 39 Dom boys are taught basket-weaving and are given a little elementary education. They are under the direct management of the District Board and are situated at Mānjhi, Mashrak and Mirzāpur.

BOARDING-HOUSES. There are 4 unaided boarding-houses with 20 boarders, one being attached to the Siwān High school and the others to the three Guru Training schools. Another boarding-house has also been built recently for the Chaprā Zilā School.

CHAPTER XV.

GAZETTEER.

Alīganj Sewān.—See Siwān.

Amarpur.—A village situated in the south-west of the Siwān subdivision, 2 miles to the west of Daraulī, with a population, according to the census of 1901, of 1,568 persons. It contains a fine old mosque of red brick, now falling into ruins, which stands on the bank of the river Gogrā. It is said that it was built during the time of Shāh Jahān (1628—58) under the supervision of his Deputy, Amar Singh, but that the work was left incomplete. Local patriotism says that the village derives its name from that of the builder of the mosque, Amar Singh.

Ambikā Asthān.—See Ami.

Ami.—A village in the headquarters subdivision, situated about 14 miles east of Chaprā, with a population, according to the census of 1901, of 696 persons. It is also called Ambikā Asthān, a name derived from the fact that it contains a temple dedicated to Ambikā Bhawānī. The legend in connection with this temple is a familiar one regarding Siva and Satī. In the early ages, it is said, king Daksha made a sacrifice with the object of obtaining a son, but did not invite Siva, to whom his daughter Satī was married. In grief and anger that such an insult should have been offered to her divine husband, Satī threw herself into the sacrificial fire; and Siva, wild with rage, transfixed her dead body on the point of his trident and rushed hither and thither through the world, which was threatened with destruction. But Vishnu, the preserver, came to the rescue and flung his discus (*chakra*) at the body of Satī and cut it in pieces. These pieces fell scattered over the earth, and every place where any of them fell became a sanctuary full of the divine spirit of Satī. One portion, it is said, dropped on the spot where the temple now stands, and close by is pointed out the site of the sacrificial fire (*jajnakund*). An annual fair is held in the village in the month of Chait. Local *pandits* also identify the place with the old fortress of Rājā Surath.

Basnauli Gangar.—See Mahārājganj.

Chainpur.—A large village on the Dāhā river, situated about 6 miles from Ekmā railway station. It contains the residence of the Chainpur Bābus, a family of influential zamīndārs of the Bābhan caste, which is connected by marriage with half the Bābhan families of Bihār. It is reported that the gross rental of the estate is Rs. 14,000 and that the Government revenue paid by it is Rs. 7,500.

Chaprā.—Headquarters of the district, situated in 25° 47′ N. and 84° 44′ E., on an old bank of the river Gogrā, close to its junction with the Ganges. It is bounded on the north by the embankment of the Bengal and North-Western Railway, on the south by the old bed of the Gogrā, on the east by some comparatively high land stretching from the river to the railway embankment, and on the west by a nullah. The inhabited portions of the town lie principally to the east and west. The western is the older portion in which the richer inhabitants dwell, and here are also situated the principal bazars. The newer or eastern portion has gradually grown up round the civil courts and public offices, most of which were constructed some 50 years ago. In the midst of and round both the old and new portions of the town are large groves of mango trees and numerous little gardens, which add considerably to the beauty of the place. The greatest length of the town is about five miles from east to west; while the average breadth does not exceed one mile. It is only, however, the central portion of the municipality from Karīm Chak to Daulatganj, which is really urban in its nature. The eastern and western extremities are semi-rural. In 1901 the population of the town was 45,901 (including 34,862 Hindus and 10,934 Muhammadans) or nearly 12,000 less than in 1891; the decrease was mainly due to a temporary exodus of the population, which took place in consequence of an outbreak of plague just before the census.

The Gogrā formerly flowed close by the town, but at present its main channel is a mile to the south in the cold weather. The nullah, which indicates the old bed of the river, along the southern boundary of the town, is still filled with water, however, to a depth of many feet when the Gogrā is in flood, and is connected with the main stream both on the west and east opposite Ajaibganj and Telpā. The town lies low, being protected from annual inundation by the high river bank on the south, by an embanked road, known as Mahābīr Prasād's *Bāndh* on the north, and by the Salīmpur Ghāt road and the railway embankment on the west; shutters can now be fixed in the openings of the latter to shut out the flood water. In 1871 the Salīmpur Ghāt road was broken

through, and much damage was done by floods within the station. The same disaster would certainly have recurred in 1874, if the road had not in the meantime been strengthened and raised. One of the highest floods on record seems to be that which took place on the 29th August of the latter year, when the highest point reached by the water was 5·29 feet above the level of the *kachahri* compound. There was a similar flood in 1890, when most of the public roads were under deep water and there were 5 feet of water over the *kachahri* compound. The water which would flood the station, if protective works had not been constructed, comes up from the Gogrā by the Ajaibganj Nullah and branching off in two directions, terminates in a swamp (*chaur*), about 8 miles to the north of the town. It is led through the town by the Khanwā Nullah to this *chaur*, and by this means the main drains are flushed, some of the public tanks are filled, and the crops in the *chaur* are irrigated. The water can be let in and shut off by the main sluice at Sāhibganj.

The houses of the Europeans, with a club and racquet court in appropriate grounds, are situated between the Collectorate offices and the jail; and the Government English school is lodged in a large building in the same neighbourhood. At the west end of the town is the Sarai, or public rest-house, a large square building with blank walls, which would be much improved by the insertion of windows. The entrance from the east leads through two handsome iron gates, the whole being surmounted by a clock. In front of the main entrance are a flower garden and a handsome masonry tank; there is also a large grass compound on which *sādhus* and strangers visiting the town usually encamp. This building, which was built and endowed in 1869 by the late Bābu Banwāri Lāl Sāhu, a wealthy banker of the town, is maintained by an endowment of Rs. 1,16,000 invested in Government paper. It is under the management of the Municipal Commissioners, who also own two municipal markets, one near the Sarai, and the other to the east of Sāhibganj; the latter is known as the Bourdillon market after Sir James Bourdillon, K.C.S.I., a former Collector of Sāran and late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. There is also a dispensary erected in 1856 by public subscription, largely supplemented by a donation from the same public-spirited banker to commemorate a visit of the then Lieutenant-Governor. The most handsome part of the building is the female ward recently erected at the cost of the Mahārānī of Hathwā.

The roads in the town are mostly metalled, principally with *kankar*, which is found in large quantities in different parts of the district. They radiate to Sonpur, Mahārājganj, Siwān,

Guthnī and the principal *ghāts* or landing places on the Gandak, such as Salīmpur, Sattar and Rewā.

One of the quarters of the town is called Ratanpurā, which, according to an account given by a local *pandit*, was the capital of Rājā Ratan Sen of the Hindu period, who erected there a temple known as the temple of Rataneswar Nāth. Now Ratanpurā is only a *mahalā* of the town, and the temple of Dharma Nāth Jī is pointed as the former temple of Rataneswar Nāth; the idol of Siva in the temple is to this day called Rataneswar Nāth Mahādeo. There is also a goddess in the same *mahalā* known as Kotkī Devī, who is said to be the tutelary goddess of the fort of Rājā Ratan Sen.

Though the commercial prosperity of Chaprā has declined since its desertion by the Ganges and later by the Gogrā, it is still a place of considerable importance, and its position on the railway enables it to carry on a large trade. It used to be the head-quarters of many wealthy mercantile firms and banks, but during the last few years they have fallen on evil days, and many of the largest houses have been closed, owing, among other causes, to the losses made in indigo. The Katrā Bazar, which is the oldest bazar, runs from east to west along the old bank of the Gogrā, and, like all old bazars, is narrow. Most of the houses are double storeyed with projecting verandahs, some with carved woodwork being distinctly picturesque. Goods of all kinds can be procured, pottery and brass utensils being still a speciality. The manufacture of shellac has increased considerably of late years, and there are now ten factories in the town.

It is said in Hunter's Statistical Account that at the end of 18th century the English, Dutch, French, and Portuguese had factories at Chaprā. The authority for the statement regarding the French and Portuguese is unknown; but it is certain that the Dutch were here as early as the middle of the 17th century and the English by the beginning of the 18th century. There is an old Dutch cemetery near Karinga on the Baniyāpur road, at the north-west of the town, containing a mausoleum erected to the memory of one J. V. H., who died in 1712. These initials stand for Jacobus Van Horn, the Dutch Chief in Bihār, who died soon after the Dutch had abandoned Patna and withdrawn to Singiā in consequence of the exactions of Farrukhsiyar. In the old English cemetery at Karinga are two monuments erected to the memory of men of the Naval Brigade who died at Chaprā in 1859. A new cemetery has since been opened at the opposite end of of the town beyond the race course, which lies between the Sonpur and Rewā Ghāt roads, just to the south of the railway

at the east end of the town. Races were held here annually during the palmy days of indigo, but there have been none since 1899.

Besides the Government English school referred to above, there are two other High English schools, which are private institutions. There is also a public library, but it is not well supported except by Europeans. The European residents have a club with racquet and tennis courts, and the Collector's compound contains a swimming bath constructed by the late Mahārājā of Bettiah. Chaprā is the headquarters of a detachment of the Bengal and North-Western Railway Volunteers and of a troop of the Bihār Light Horse, for whom a mess house and quarters were constructed about 12 years ago. It is also a station of the German Evangelical Lutheran Mission and of a Roman Catholic Mission. There are two railway stations, viz., a main station at Bhagwān Bazar, at which all trains stop, and a flag station near the *kachahri*, which is intended for the use of people coming in on public business. The drainage of the town, cooped up as it is between the high bank of the Gogrā on the south and embanked roads on the north, is bad; and it has several times suffered severely from epidemics of cholera.

The name Chaprā, or as it should be spelt Chhaprā, is itself evidence of the liability of the place to inundation. In riverain tracts liable to flood from great rivers, the cultivators live in huts with wattled walls and thatched roofs, for the risk of their houses being washed away is sufficient to prevent them going to the expense of tiled roofs, and they have to be ready to shift their homes at the shortest notice. Such settlements have the distinctive name of *chhaprā* from the Hindī word *chhappar*, meaning a thatched roof.

Chaprā Subdivision.—Headquarters subdivision of the district, occupying its south-east extremity and lying between 25° 39′ and 26° 14′ N. and 84° 23′ and 85° 12′ E., with an area of 1,048 square miles. It is a fertile tract of rich alluvial soil, bounded on the east by the Gandak, on the south by the Ganges, on the west by the Gogrā, and on the north by the Siwān and Gopālganj subdivisions. The population was 927,718 in 1901 as compared with 1,029,639 in 1891; the decrease was largely due to severe epidemics of plague in 1900 and 1901. The density of population is 928 persons to the square mile. It contains 2,179 villages and 2 towns, viz., Chaprā, the headquarters (45,901), and Revelganj (9,765). Sonpur, at the confluence of the Ganges and Gandak, is an important railway centre and the scene of a great annual fair and bathing festival.

Chirānd or Cherānd.—A village in the headquarters subdivision, situated 6 miles east of Chaprā, on the river Gogrā just above its junction with the Ganges. The Ganges formerly flowed past the village, which must at one time have been a place of some note, as it lent its name to Chaprā, which is often called Chirān Chaprā by people of other districts, Chirān being an abbreviation of Chirānd. Few traces of its former greatness are left, but there are some large mounds marking the ruins of an ancient city. One high mound, on which four temples have been built, marks the remains of an old fort; and the hermitage of Rishi Chyavana, and two small tanks, called Jiach Kundu and Brahma Kundu in the Chirānd Mahātmya, are pointed out in different portions of the site as vestiges of the ancient Hindu period. A fair takes place every year on the last day of the month of Kārtik at the former spot, which is called Chyavana-āsrama. Chirānd is populary known as the capital of king Mayūradhvaja, and the tradition still exists that he and his queen sawed down their son in order to satisfy the craving for human flesh of Siva, who came in the disguise of an old Brāhman to test his generosity. Satisfied by this practical proof of the king's hospitality, Siva restored his son to life.

On the top of the principal mound there is an old mosque, with an inscription in the Kufic style of character over the doorway. This mosque must have been built out of the ruins of some large ancient Hindu temple, for eight square Hindu pillars, or rather pilasters, line the inside of the walls. The inscription over the doorway is in three double lines, and appears to bear the name of Husain Shāh, king of Bengal from 1493 to 1519; presumably this Musalmān ruler destroyed an ancient Hindu temple at Chirānd and built the mosque out of its materials. Some evidence, at least, of the antiquity of the temple, and probably also of some other buildings formerly connected with it or surrounding it, is afforded by the size of the bricks, the largest and most ancient of which measure 17¾ inches in length by 10 inches in breadth and 3½ inches in thickness. The smallest in size are 12¾ inches by 9½ inches and 12½ by 8 inches. A portion of the elevated ancient ruined site has been cut away by the river channel, showing a high cliff of earth, full of large ancient bricks, and pierced by numerous shafts of ancient wells of narrow diameter lined with cylinders of red earthenware.

Chirānd is sometimes also called Cherānd, and is said to have been founded by, or to derive its name from, the Cheros, once a ruling race in Sāran. There seems to be no doubt at least that

Chirānd was an ancient Buddhist town, for images of Buddha and other figures of the Buddhist period have been found there. Mr. Carlleyle indeed conjectured that Chirānd, "the most ancient place in the whole of the Sāran district," may have been the site of the Drona or Kumbhān stūpa, erected over the vessel with which the relics of Buddha were measured after his cremation. He says:—"I think that the site of the Kumbhān stūpa should really be looked for among the mounds of ancient ruins at Chirānd. For instance, the mosque of Husain Shāh, which was built out of the materials of an ancient Hindu temple, is situated on the summit of a high mound of ruins, which might just possibly contain the ruins of a stūpa buried in its interior. It is worthy of remark, with regard to the name of the place that *chiran* and *chirāyu* mean ancient; while the root *chīr* implies the act of cutting asunder, splitting, rending, dividing or division, and might just possibly refer to the division of the remains of Buddha into eight parts, each equal to a *drona*, as measured by a *kumbha* of that capacity, which vessel was afterwards enshrined in a stūpa, which was therefore called the Kumbhān stūpa. But the place where this was done may have been called the dividing, or the place of division; and the memory of some such signification may have been preserved in such a name as Chirān." *

Dr. Hoey indeed goes further in the belief that Chirānd was an ancient Buddhist site, and identifies it with the great Buddhist capital Vaisāli. This theory he advances with the following remarks:—"We know that when Buddha left Magadha for the last time he went towards Vaisāli. The gate by which he left Pātaliputra was afterwards called the Gautama gate, and the place where he crossed the Ganges was called thereafter the Gautama Ferry. The Gautama *ghāt* is still known east of Revelganj. We also have the story of Ananda's leaving Pātaliputra for Vaisāli, and we read that, when he reached the Ganges, he discovered that the people of Vaisāli had come out to meet him in the hope of obtaining his body, as they knew he was about to die and they wished to do it honour; but he was pursued by Ajātasatru's army, which had been sent with the same object. He therefore surrendered himself to death (entered *samādhi*) on an island in the river, and his body parted in two, so that the rival claimants obtained equal parts. This story is preserved for us in the name Chirānd, which is simply *chidra-anga*, the divided body.

* Reports, Arch. Surv. Ind., Vol. XXII, 1885.

"It is very remarkable that there is a local tradition at Chirānd based on this story. It is this. There was a king at Cherānd named Moraddhuj (Mayūradhvaja) in the Dwāpara Yuga who professed great devotion to the gods. Krishna determined to put the king's faith to a test, and came one day to his palace disguised as a mendicant, and asked for the right half of the king's body for some sacrificial purpose. He explained to the king that his wife and son must each hold one end of a saw (*ārā*) and saw him in two, but if he shed tears, the gift would not be acceptable. The king agreed and the operation commenced, but presently he began to shed tears from his left eye. The mendicant reminded the king that the professed gift was liable to rejection, but the latter explained that the left eye wept because the right half of the body was alone being taken and the other left. Krishna was so pleased with this devotion that he exercised his divine power, stopped the operation, restored the body to its former state, and flung the saw away. It fell at Arrah in the Shāhābād district, giving its name to that place. This story is certainly the same in origin as that told of Ananda. It is a Hindu version of facts underlying the Buddhist story. The conclusion to which I come is that Vaisāli did not lie on the east but on the west of the present Great Gandak. I shall presently fix it beyond doubt east of Chaprā, probably at Chirānd itself.

"There are some suggestions based on a study of the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta which I must note. When Buddha had crossed the Ganges for the last time on his way to Vaisāli, he first visited Kotigāma and then Nādika, after which he arrived at the great city. There he was entertained by the courtesan Ambapali at her mango grove outside the city. From Vaisāli Buddha went on to Veluva, where he was seized with the illness which eventually terminated his life. This is probably the modern Belwa, north-east of Chirānd. Near it we meet with such remarkable names as Sārnāth Chak and Dharma Chak. Buddha then seems to have turned again towards Vaisāli, for he went to the Chāpalā Chaitya, which the text would lead us to believe to have been near the city, if not in it. This name is probably either from Chapalā or Chāpalā (*Sans.*) a loose woman, and thus alludes to the concubine spoken of by the pilgrims; or from *chāpa ālaya* (*Sans.*) the bow-place, where the bow was deposited. Anyhow, there can be no mistake as to the mound lying to the east of the town of Chaprā, called Telpā. This is undoubtedly the Sanskrit *Talpa* "a tower," and is that built for the mother of the thousand sons; and the site of Vaisāli is

therefore fixed. It is the modern Chirānd, and spread along the banks of the Ganges east and west of the present town."*

Daraulī.—A village situated 44 miles to the north-west of Chaprā on the Chaprā-Guthnī road and on the north bank of the Gogrā. It contains a dispensary, a sub-registry office and a police station, situated a little to the west of the bazar, which runs partly from east to west, partly from north to south. There is also a ferry to the district of Azamgarh, by which a considerable traffic passes. Two miles to the west, in the village of Amarpur, is a fine old mosque described in the article on that place.

Dariāganj or Doriganj.—A village in the headquarters subdivision situated 7 miles east of Chaprā. Tradition relates that it was formerly a large grain-market standing at the confluence of the Ganges and Gogrā, and that Hindus thronged to the place for bathing at different festivals. It is said that the village was originally one of the *tolās* or hamlets of Chirānd, and that the whole *tāluk*, consisting of 42 villages, formerly belonged to the Chaudhuri of Chirānd, Chaudhuri Dariā Singh, whose descendants still reside here. The village, which was formerly on the Ganges and is now on the Gogrā, is inhabited mostly by Rājputs and Brāhmans, and its population in 1901 was 134.

Domaigarh.—A village in the headquarters subdivision situated on the Gogrā 28 miles north-west of Chaprā. It is a centre for the trade in *sāl* wood and boats, and is called after a *fakīr* Dome Pīr, who is said to have resided here.

Dumarsan.—A village in the headquarters subdivision situated 28 miles north of Chaprā, on the Chaprā-Sattar Ghāt Road. It is not a large village, but is becoming of some importance owing to the Rām Navamī fair held annually in the month of Chait (March) under the auspices of the local zamīndārs. At this fair horses, bullocks, and buffaloes are sold in large numbers. There is a temple dedicated to Siva and also a *thākurbāri* in the village. Its population in 1901 was 558.

Dighwā Dubauli.—A village in the extreme north-east of the Gopālganj subdivision, situated about 33 miles north of Chaprā and 25 miles north-east of Gopālganj. It contains some ancient remains, of which Mr. Carlleyle has given the following account:—"At Dighwā Dubauli I found an ancient site, and

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* W. Hoey, Litt. D., *On the identification of Kusinārā, Vaisāli and other places*, J. A. S. B., No. 1, 1900. See also *Notes on Chirānd in the District Sāran*, by Nundolal Dey, J. A. S. B., No. 2, 1903.

two extraordinary pyramidal-shaped mounds. These two extraordinary mounds are situated close to the south-east of the village, and east and west of each other. The western mound is situated almost adjoining the south-south-eastern end of the village, and the eastern mound is situated at the distance of 640 feet to the east-south-east of the other, and close to the road. Each of these mounds is of a pyramidal shape, with four corners at the base projecting considerably outwards, so that a ground plan of one of these mounds would resemble a four-pointed star surmounted centrically by a cone." After giving the dimensions of these mounds, which are of great size, Mr. Carlleyle goes on to say:—"These mounds appeared to be formed of clay, but mixed with small fragments of brick and pottery. At the distance of 950 feet to the south of the eastern mound, there is a roundish-shaped mound of moderate height, with a horizontal diameter of about 200 feet from north to south, and about 140 feet from east to west. There is an old well here. Across the road to the north of the village there is a portion of a mound, which appears as if cut off by the road from the large flat mound, on which the village Dighwā Dubauli itself stands. These mounds are said to have been the work of Chero-Chai, *i.e.*, of the Cheros, an aboriginal race who seem to have once been powerful in this part of the country, but who now inhabit the hills to the south of the Ganges."

In this village was found the historical copper plate, known as the Dighwā Dubauli plate and dating back to 761-62 A.D., of which an account has been given in Chapter II. "Either," says Dr. Fleet, "it was dug out of a field some years ago (before 1864) by a Brāhman of Chaprā; or the ancestors of the then owner of it found it in a temple in a ruined Musalmān fort; but it was so long ago that they did not seem to have any distinct tradition about it, nor to be able to give any authentic information on the subject." [Reports, Arch. Surv. Ind., vol. xxii, 1885; J. F. Fleet, *Sanskrit and Old Kanarese Inscriptions* (*The Dighwā Dubauli Plate*), Indian Antiquary, 1886.]

Dighwārā.—A village situated on the Bengal and North-Western Railway, 18 miles east-south-east of Chaprā. It is a rising centre of the grain and hide trade, and contains a population, according to the census of 1901, of 2,542 souls. The village contains a police outpost, Middle English school, post office and a District Board inspection bungalow. General Cunningham was at one time inclined to consider that this locality was the site of the ancient Buddhist stūpa known as the Drona or Kumbhān stūpa. Local pandits trace the name to a celebrated sage called Chandramuni or Dīrghwārā.

Ekmā.—A village on the Bengal and North-Western Railway, situated 18 miles north-west of Chaprā. It is one of the centres of the grain traffic of the district, being connected with Chaprā, Siwān, Mānjhi, Barauli and Mashrak by good roads. Imports consist of rice and other food-grains, and the exports are chiefly molasses and linseed. There is a police station here, besides a sub-registry office and a District Board inspection bungalow.

Godnā.—*See* Revelganj.

Gopālganj.—Headquarters of the subdivision of the same name situated in 26° 28′ N. and 84° 27′ E. It lies on the west bank of the Gandakī river, 2 miles from the main Gandak embankment, 58 miles from Chaprā, and 21 miles north-east of Siwān, with which it is connected by a good metalled road and also by a branch line of Bengal and North-Western Railway running from Siwān to Thāwe. Its population was 1,614 in 1901. Since it was made the subdivisional headquarters in 1875, this place, which was then quite a tiny hamlet, has developed into a large and important village; and its further development will be accelerated by the extension of the railway to Thāwe, which is 4 miles from Gopālganj. Besides the court of the Subdivisional Officer and the sub-jail, Gopālganj contains a Munsif's court, police station, High school, sub-registry office and dispensary.

Gopālganj Subdivision.—Northern subdivision of the district, lying between 26° 12′ and 26° 39′ N. and 83° 54′ and 84° 55′ E., with an area of 788 square miles. It is bounded on the east by the Gandak river, on the south by the Siwān subdivision, on the west and north by Gorakhpur. It forms an alluvial plain bounded by the Gandak and intersected by five smaller rivers, which flow in a southerly direction, viz., the Jharahī, the Khanwā, Dāhā, Gandakī and Dhanai. For administrative purposes the subdivision is divided into two thānas, of which one lies to the east, viz., Gopālganj with its two outposts, Baraulī and Mahārānī, while on the west is thāna Mīrganj with 3 outposts, Bhore, Kateya and Kuchai Kot. There are 4 *parganas* in this subdivision, viz., Kuāri, Sipāh, Dangsi and Marhal, and a part of Pachlakh *pargana*. The subdivision contains a population of 635,047, according to the census of 1901, and is the least densely populated part of the district, supporting only 806 persons to the square mile. There is one town, Mīrganj, with 9,698 inhabitants, and 2,148 villages, one of which, Gopālganj, is the headquarters. The subdivision was created in 1875.

Guthnī.—A village situated 54 miles north-west of Chaprā, on the east bank of the Little Gandakī river, which here forms the

boundary between Bengal and the United Provinces; the river Gogrā is only 4 miles to the south. The village, which is an outpost of the Daraulī thāna, is a centre of the sugar manufacture of Sāran, molasses and unrefined sugar being purchased in large quantities by the refiners from the travelling dealers called *bepāris*, who have previously bought it up from the ryots. It is not exported by the refiners themselves, but by the *bepāris*, who despatch it to Patna and also to the United Provinces. The importance of Guthnī is declining rapidly, owing to its distance from the railway, a very large quantity of sugar being now despatched by rail from Mairwā, which is only 8 miles distant. Most of the large merchants have consequently given up their godowns at Guthnī, and built new ones at Mairwā.

Hasanpurā.—A village in the Siwān subdivision situated 13 miles south of Siwān on the bank of the Dhanai river. It is said to have been founded by Makhdūm Saiyad Hasan Chishtī, a saint who came from Arabia to India and settled here. He founded a *khānkāh* or religious institution, for the upkeep of which and of his *dargāh* or tomb an endowment of land was granted by the Emperor of Delhi. The village contains the remains of a large mosque and the *dargāh* of the saint, which is visited both by Hindus and Muhammadans.

Hathwā.—A village in the Siwān subdivision situated 2½ miles west of Mīrganj and 12 miles north of Siwān. The village is the seat of the Mahārājā of Hathwā, and contains the palace, a large and imposing structure with a fine *darbār* hall, and the dwellings of the *entourage* which surround an Indian nobleman. There are also a well laid-out public garden, High school, and a large hospital known as the Victoria Hospital, with a statue of Queen Victoria, erected by the liberality of the Rāj.

Hathwā Rāj.—An estate, situated for the most part in a compact block in the north-west of Sāran, but also comprising property in the Champāran, Muzaffarpur, Shāhābād, Patna and Darjeeling districts of Bengal, and in Gorakhpur in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. It has an area of 561 square miles, of which 491 square miles are cultivated. The population in 1901 was 534,905. The rent-roll (including cesses) amounts to 11½ lakhs, and the land revenue and cesses payable to 2½ lakhs.

The Hathwā Rāj family, which like the families of the Mahārājās of Benāres, Bettiah and Tekāri, is of the Bābhan caste, is regarded as one of the oldest of the aristocratic houses in Bihār. This family, which was originally known as that of the Rājās of Husepur, claims an antiquity anterior to the

Muhammadan conquest of India and is said to have been settled in Sāran for more than a hundred generations. The genealogical tree of the family shows a line of 103 Rājās, the patronymic of the earlier Rājās being Sain, which was changed to Singh with the 16th in descent, to Mal with the 83rd, and to Sāhi with the 87th of the line. The title of Mahārājā seems to have been conferred first by the Emperor of Delhi on the 86th Rājā, Kalyān Mal, and that of Mahārājā Bahādur on the 87th, Khem Karan Singh. The earlier history of the family is obscure, but tradition asserts that *pargana* Sipāh, which forms a portion of the Rāj, was wrested by Jubarāj Sāhi, the great-grand-father of Fateh Sāhi, from Rājā Kābul Muhammad of Barhariā. This chieftain was an Afghān noble, a partisan of the king of Bengal, who, with other rebellious Afghān chiefs, raised the standard of rebellion in Bihār during the reign of Akbar. He was killed in battle, and his citadel taken and destroyed by Jubarāj Sāhi, who was allowed by the Emperor to retain *pargana* Sipāh. Sardār Sāhi, the immediate predecessor of Fateh Sāhi, is said to have invaded the principality of Majhauli in the Gorakhpur district and to have demolished the fortress. It is said that one of the conditions on which Sardār Sāhi made peace with the Rājā of Majhauli was that the latter should not display standards or drums, the ensigns of a ruling Rājā until he had retaken them, and that the Majhauli family still conforms to this condition, at any rate in the property belonging to the Hathwā Rāj.

The authentic history of the Hathwā family commences with the time of Fateh Sāhi, who was Mahārājā of Husepur when the East India Company obtained the *Dīwāni* of Bengal, Bihār and Orissa in 1765. He not only refused to pay revenue, but resisted the troops sent against him, and was with difficulty expelled from Husepur. He then retired to a large tract of forest between Gorakhpur and Sāran, whence he frequently invaded British territory; a fuller account of the career of this rebel chief will be found in Chapter II. In consequence of his recusancy the zamīndāri of Husepur was attached, but he continued to hold that portion of his estate which was subject to the Nawāb Vizier of Oudh and which is now in possession of his decendant, the Rājā of Tamkūhī in Gorakhpur. While the Rājā thus waged war on the Company, his cousin, Basant Sāhi, remained loyal, and assisted the British troops in their fruitless attempt to seize Fateh Sāhi, by whom he was himself captured and put to death in 1775. For some years the estate remained under the direct management of Government, but in 1791 Lord

Cornwallis restored it to Chhattardhāri Sāhi, a grand-nephew of Fateh Sāhi, and grandson of Basant Sāhi, in whose time the family seat was removed from Husepur to Hathwā.

The title of Mahārājā Bahādur was not conferred on him till 1837, for it appears to have been thought that there could not be two Mahārājās of Husepur, and as long as Fateh Sāhi was living, it was considered out of the question to confer a similar title on Chhattardhāri Sāhi. He rendered valuable assistance at the time of the Santāl rebellion and also during the Mutiny, the services rendered by him in 1857 receiving the special commendation of Government. Chhattardhāri Sāhi, who died in 1858, had two sons, both of whom died before their father, leaving two sons each; but during his lifetime he had nominated as his heir Rājendra Pratāp Sāhi, his eldest grandson. The succession was contested by the other grandsons of the deceased Mahārājā, one of whom, Bīr Pratāp Sāhi, the younger son of the youngest son of the Mahārājā, fought the case until it was decided by the Privy Council in favour of Rājendra Pratāp Sāhi. The result of the litigation was to decide that the Hathwā Rāj is an impartible Rāj, which descends under the *kulāchār* or family rule of inheritance to the eldest son, to the exclusion of all his younger brothers, who are provided with sufficient land or an allowance in money for their maintenance.

Rājendra Pratāp Sāhi rendered good service in re-establishing order in the district at the close of the Mutiny, and was rewarded by the grant of some confiscated villages in Shāhābād, which yielded a gross rental of Rs. 20,000 per annum. He died in 1871 and was succeeded by his son, Krishna Pratāp Sāhi, during whose minority the Hathwā estate was taken in charge by the Court of Wards and remained for about 3 years under the management of Mr. Hodgkinson of the Bengal Civil Service. He attained his majority in October 1874, received the title of Mahārājā Bahādur, which had also been enjoyed by his father and great-grand-father, and in 1889 was made a K. C. I. E. He died in 1896 and was succeeded by his infant son, Kumār Guru Mahādeosaran Prasād Sāhi, who is now the proprietor, the estate being managed during his minority by the Court of Wards.

The family residence is at Hathwā, 12 miles north of Siwān, where Mahārājā Krishna Pratāp Sāhi built a palace, a large modern building with one of the finest *darbār* halls in India. A fuller account of the Hathwā Rāj will be found in *The Aristocracy of Bihār*, Calcutta Review, 1883, and *The Chronicles of the Hathwā Rāj*, Calcutta Review, 1897.

Husepur.—A village situated in the north-west of the Gopālganj subdivision on the western bank of the Jharahī river. Historically, this village is of some interest, as it was formerly the headquarters of the Mahārājās of Hathwā, when they were still rulers of the country. Contingnous to it to the north-east is Kalyānpur, which was the site of a still earlier residence. There is little, however, left beyond mounds of bricks overgrown with jungle, which mark the ruins of old forts, and of moats now almost filled up. On one of the mounds at Husepur a bungalow was built by the father of the present minor Mahārājā of Hathwā, and was used by him as a country residence. The village also contains modern temple, two large tanks and a big mango tope.

These obscure villages dotted with straggling huts were formerly places of importance. Kalyān Mal, who was the first of the line to receive the title of Mahārājā from the Mughal Emperor, gave his name to the village of Kalyānpur, as well as to the surrounding *pargana*, which is known as Kalyānpur Kuāri. At Kalyānpur the ruins of the fortress of Kalyān Mal are still traceable, besides large tanks and wells. Mahārājā Khem Karan Sāhi, a descendant of Kalyān Mal, having removed his residence to Husepur and built a fort there, that place was the headquarters of the family, till Fateh Sāhi became a rebel and was driven out from it by the British Government. A sketch of the career of Fateh Sāhi has already been given in chapter II, and it will be sufficient to mention here that he fled to Gorakhpur, then the independent territory of the Nawāb Vizier of Oudh, and took shelter in the jungles of Tamkūhī or Joginī, which formed part of his estate.

The outlaw made several unsuccessful attempts to regain Husepur, and for many years led the life of a free-booter, making frequent raids into Sāran. In the course of these raids he murdered several rent-collectors, and also his cousin Basant Sāhi, whom he beheaded at Jādopur, a village 5 miles to the north of Gopālganj, where a big *pīpal* tree marks the scene of his death. Basant Sāhi had helped the Company's troops in getting information of the movements of Fateh Sāhi, for whose capture, dead or alive, a reward of Rs. 10,000 had been offered. Enraged at the treachery of his cousin, Fateh Sāhi, learning that he was in camp at Jādopur with Mīr Jamāl, the rent-collector of the Company, sallied forth at night from the jungle of Charakhiā at the head of 1,000 horsemen, and at day-break attacked Mīr Jamāl, killed him and Basant Sāhi, and sent the head of the latter to his widow at Husepur. The widow of Basant Sāhi

thereupon immolated herself on the funeral pyre, with thirteen of her hand-maids, holding the head of her deceased husband in her lap. A big banyan tree in the jungle to the east of the ruined fort at Husepur still marks the site of her death; and there are 14 small mounds of earth under the tree held sacred to the memory of the *satī*; members of the Hathwā Rāj family do *pūjā* there, as also under the *pīpal* tree at Jādopur where Basant Sāhi was killed. Fateh Sāhi, after the loss of his possessions in Sāran district, established himself at Tamkūhī, and his descendant is the present Mahārājā of Tamkūhī.

The Husepur Rāj remained under the Company's direct management for several years, but at the time of the Permanent Settlement it was settled with Chhattardhāri Sāhi, the grandson of Basant Sāhi, who then was a minor, living under the protection of a Rājput follower of his grandfather, Dajju Singh of Bharthui. Dajju Singh was given some *jāgīr* land in recognition of his loyalty, and his descendants hold the village of Phulwariā which is to the east of Mānjha, 7 miles to the east of Gopālganj. Chhattardhāri Sāhi became the first Mahārājā of Hathwā and moved the family residence from Husepur to Hathwā.

Jādopur.—See Husepur.

Kalyānpur.—See Husepur.

Karinga.—A *mahalā* or quarter of Chaprā town which was in possession of the Dutch till 1770. The Dutch cemetery at Karinga, with inscriptions dating as far back as 1712, is an object of interest. See also the article on Chaprā.

Lakri Dargāh.—A village in the Siwān subdivision, situated about 15 miles north of Siwān, and 13 miles from Gopālganj, containing a population, according to the census of 1901, of 1,713 persons. The village is so-called because it contains the tomb (*dargāh*) of a Muhammadan saint, Shāh Arzān of Patna, in which woodwork is prominent. The story runs that the saint, attracted by the solitude of the place, performed a *chilah* here, *i.e.*, gave himself up to religious contemplation for 40 days. He also, it is said, set up a religious establishment (*khānkāh*), which was endowed by the Emperor Aurangzeb; this institution is held in great veneration by the Musalmān community and the proceeds of the endowment are utilized to meet the expenses connected with the *dargāh*. The anniversary of the saint's death is celebrated on the 11th of Rabi-us-sānī of every year and attracts large numbers.

Mahārājganj.—A village, also called Basnauli Gangar, situated in 26° 7′ N. and 84° 30′ E. almost in the centre of the district. It is about 25 miles to the north-west of Chaprā,

10 miles to the south-west of Siwān, and 3 miles north of the railway station of Duraundha on the main line, with which it is connected by a branch railway line, as well as by a wide metalled road. Its population in 1901 was 3,300. Mahārājganj contains one of the largest bazars in the district and is an important trade centre, especially for grain and spices. Grain is brought principally from Champāran and Muzaffarpur, and also from Bengal by rail. Pepper and other spices are exported from Mahārājganj to Champāran and the Tarai in carts *viâ* Baraulī and Salīmpur Ghāt, and to villages along the route which are not touched by the railway. These carts bring back rice and other grain from Champāran. There is also a considerable iron industry. The iron, which is entirely English, is brought up from Calcutta by rail, and is then made up into *kodālis*, buckets (*kunr*) for well irrigation, and pans for boiling molasses and saltpetre; these articles are exported to Gorakhpur in the United Provinces and to Champāran. Formerly Indian iron from Chotā Nāgpur was also used, but it has been entirely ousted by the English article. *Gur* or molasses is also brought to Mahārājganj in large quantities from every part of the district, and thence sent by rail to the large refineries in Cawnpore and other places in the United Provinces, and even to Bombay. Mahārājganj was formerly a large saltpetre depôt, but that industry has very much decayed. During the rains the grain traffic used to be almost entirely suspended owing to the want of river carriage and the absence of suitable roads, but the contiguity of the railway now maintains the prosperity of this thriving mart. The village contains a police outpost, a dispensary, a middle English school, a post office and a District Board inspection bungalow.

Mairwā.—A village in the Siwān subdivision situated 13 miles west of Siwān close to the border of the district; it contains the most westerly station on the Bengal and North-Western Railway in the Sāran district. It has lately attracted much of the local trade in sugar, which is exported hence to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh and elsewhere by rail. The village contains a celebrated shrine called Brahma Asthān; this shrine stands on the bank of the Jharahī river, and fairs are held there in Kārtik and Chait.

Mānjhi.—A village and police station situated 12 miles west of Chaprā on the Gogrā. On the river bank are the remains of an old fort of some size, which, legend says, was built in the Hindu period by one Mānjhi Makrā of the Chero dynasty, while others say that the Rājās were Dosādhs or Mallāhs by caste. The

title Mānjhi and the position of the fort on the river seem to favour the last hypothesis; one may perhaps assume that it was the latter which ensured their supremacy, and that they were probably little better than glorified pirates. The fort is said to have come into the possession of Rājputs of the Harihobans clan, whose headquarters were at Haldī in the Ballia district. The story runs that, enraged at the low caste Mānjhi demanding the hand of a Rājput *jāgīrdār's* daughter in marriage, they pretended to accede to his request; and after inviting him and all his relatives and *sardārs* to the marriage feast, made them drunk and put them all to death. The *jāgīrdār* then easily captured the fort and took possession of the whole of the Rāj. It is said to have remained in the possession of this family till the reign of Shāh Jahān, when it was given by that Emperor, with other *jāgīrs* in this district, to one Khemarjit Rai of Garh Phuphand near Fyzābād. Tradition relates that the latter, while a prisoner at Delhi for some offence, was allowed to wrestle with a famous athlete, overthrew him, and so pleased Shāh Jahān that he was given his liberty and these *jāgīrs* on condition of his becoming a Muhammadan. This he did, and his descendants were first called Mallik and then Dīwān; finally, in the fifth generation, they assumed the title of Khān. The Collectorate records shew that one Shahāmat Alī Khān held Mānjhi and other villages as *nankar* as late as 1835, when they were attached or resumed, and resettled with him and one Bībī Azimat as *nizāmat* land.

Mīrganj.—A town in the Gopālganj subdivision situated in 26° 25′ N. and 84° 20′ E., 10 miles north-west of Siwān, and nearly midway between it and Gopālganj. Population (1901) 9,698. It is a place of considerable commercial importance, being a centre at which grain from the north and north-west is collected and then exported to Patna and elsewhere. Several Patna merchants have agents here, more particularly for the linseed trade; there is also a considerable trade in cotton and *gur*. The village contains a police station, sub-registry office, and a large bazar, which has been much improved lately by the Hathwā Rāj. It has been connected with the Bengal and North-Western Railway system by a branch line from Siwān to Thāwe, passing through Mīrganj; the station is called Hathwā after the village of that name, which is about 2½ miles distant.

Muhammadpur.—A village in the headquarters subdivision situated 23 miles west of Chaprā on the bank of a small river which forms a tributary of the river Gogrā. The village contains eight temples dedicated to Siva, and a grain-market is held

there twice a week. Though the mart is now declining owing to the trade being attracted to Ekmā, which is on the line of rail, it is still a place of some importance for the storage of grain, and trade is fairly brisk in the rainy season, when the stream on which the village stands is full. Its population in 1901 was 757.

Papaur.—A village in the Siwān subdivision situated about 3 miles east of Siwān, of which the following account has been given by Dr. Hoey:—"It represents a place of great antiquity, and must be the Pāva where the goldsmith Kunda lived. When Buddha came thus far he went with his followers to the goldsmith's grove; and while there, he accepted an invitation to dine with the goldsmith, to whose house he went. There he was served with the *sukara** which aggravated the symptoms developed at Veluva and gave his illness a fatal turn. This led him to resolve to push on to Kusinārā, and he set out with Ananda in that direction." He adds that near the present homestead there are the remains of a more ancient habitation, from which he obtained some copper Indo-Bactrian coins. The name Papaur appears to be a corruption of Pāpapurā or Pāvapurā, *i.e.*, the sacred city. [W. Hoey, *Identification of Kusinārā, Vaisāli and other places*, J. A. S. B., 1900.]

Parsā.—A large village situated about 3 miles to the north-east of Ekmā railway station on the Ekmā-Sohāgpur road; it is known as Bābu's Parsā to distinguish it from another village of the same name, which contains a police station. One of the four co-operative credit societies of the district has been started here; it is organized by the officers of the Hathwā Rāj, to which the village in great part belongs.

Revelganj or Godnā.—A town in the headquarters subdivision situated in 25° 47′ N. and 84° 39′ E. on the northern bank of the Gogrā. According to the census of 1901, the total population is 9,765. The population has decreased, both since the census of 1891 and also since 1872, when it was returned as 13,415, but the decrease is probably not so large as the figures would indicate, owing to the exodus of a large number of the inhabitants on account of plague at the time the census was taken. The town runs from east to west, and is closely built along the banks of the Gogrā, which in the rains is as much as a mile in breadth.

* "This," says Dr. Hoey, "is not boar's flesh, but *sukara-kanda*, 'hog's root,' a bulbous root found chiefly in mounds and jungles, which I have seen Hindus eat with avidity. It is a *phalahar*, permissible to eat on fast days."

The present bazar was founded by Mr. Revel, Collector of Customs, in 1788. On the 9th July of that year, he informed the Collector that he had selected a place on the bank of the river, where he intended to establish a *chaukī* to collect the dues. Six years later we find the place described as follows by Mr. Twining, who was passing up the Ganges with the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Robert Abercromby:—"At the junction of the Gogrā with the Ganges the East India Company have a Custom house. The Custom-master had a handsome house close to the shore, from which he came to pay his respects to the General, offering to send him anything his station afforded. On his return, he sent a boat after us with fruit and vegetables. Amongst the former were some fine grapes, the first I had seen in India. This gentleman's name was Revel."* His house and tomb close to the river bank are still pointed out, and his memory is held in such repute that his tomb is considered a shrine, and his name invoked on occasions of calamity or adversity. The tomb, which stands in front of the Eden Bazar alongside the Chaprā-Guthnī road, was covered with a canopy, and an inscription in marble was put up, in 1883, by the late Rai Tārāpada Mukherji Bahādur, Vice-Chairman of the Municipality, acting on a suggestion of Sir Ashley Eden, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The inscription runs as follows:—"In this grave lies Henry Revel, Collector of Customs under the East India Company, from whom the town of Revelganj derives its name. He had just established a custom *chaukī* at the neighbouring bazar of Semariā in 1788, and during a long residence close to the spot he succeeded in gaining the esteem and affection of the surrounding people, who raised this tomb over his remains, and whose descendants still cherish his memory with religious veneration." A fair is held here twice a year in the months of Kārtik and Chait. In the same garden is the tomb of Major George Burgoyne, who died at Revelganj in 1846 while on his way to join at Chinsura as commanding officer; from the epitaph we learn that his death was caused by fatigue and exposure during the campaign of the Sutlej and the battle of Sobrāon.

Revelganj owned its origin and commercial importance to the fact that formerly it commanded the junction of the Gogrā and Ganges; but the steady departure of the Ganges to a point lower down brought about its gradual decay. Even as late as 30 years ago, however, it was the second largest river mart with a Ganges-borne trade in Bengal; its exports were larger than from any

*T. Twining, *Travels in India a hundred years ago*, 1893.

other riverside mart, and in exports only was it inferior to Patna. It was, in fact, the great changing station where boats from Lower Bengal used to tranship cargoes of rice and salt to boats from Fyzābād and Gorakhpur, which brought down wheat, barley, oil-seeds and pulses of various sorts. Oil-seeds still appear as one of the largest exports from Revelganj; they are brought down by the railway and by boat from Oudh and the Upper Provinces. Though still one of the principal markets in the district, the importance of Revelganj as a centre of commerce has considerably diminished. The railway has diverted much of its trade, and it has also suffered from the river setting towards the opposite bank and from the retreat eastwards of the point of junction of the Ganges and Gogrā; large boats can, however, still discharge cargoes fairly close to the *ghāt*, near which are large *golās* or granaries. It is the competition of the railway more than the recession of the river that has injured the trade of Revelganj, and a significant symptom of its decline is, that the great firm of Ralli Brothers had an agency here till 1900, but have now moved it to Gorakhpur.

Revelganj is connected with Chaprā by a branch railway, and with Oudh on the one side and with Patna and Lower Bengal on the other by the steamers of the India General Steam Navigation Company, which call daily on their journey up and down stream. The great bulk of the up-country trade is with Oudh and other parts of the United Provinces, and of the down-country trade with Calcutta, through the medium of the railway.

The native name of the town is Godnā. It is regarded locally as the traditional residence or *āsrama* of Gautama, the founder of the school of Nyāya philosophy, which embraces Indian logic. Here, it is said, he lived with his wife Ahalyā in the days of Rāma Chandra, who visited him on his way to Janakpur. The legend is that Indra became enamoured of Ahalyā and visited her in the guise of her husband. Gautama saw him as he left her room and cursed him with perpetual loss of virility, while Ahalyā was changed into a stone till Rāma should come and deliver her, which he did when on his way to Janakpur with Lakshman and Vishwāmitra. The story is told at length in the Rāmāyana of Vālmikī and referred to in that of Tulsī Dās. A shrine has been built on the spot where Gautama's hut is believed to have stood. In commemoration of his connection with the place a Sanskrit school was built by public subscription between the years 1883-87. The foundation stone was laid in the year first named by Sir Rivers Thompson, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and the school was called after him the Thompson Gautama Pāthshālā

It teaches Nyāya philosophy and Sanskrit literature to a large number of pupils.

Popular tradition says that the name of Godnā is derived from, and is a corruption of that of this Gautama; but this may perhaps be only a modern adaptation of a Buddhist tradition, and it may possibly have referred originally to Gautama Buddha crossing over from Pātaliputra on his way to Kusinārā.

Sāran Khās.—A village in the headquarters subdivision situated about 25 miles north-east of Chaprā and 16 miles north of Mānjhi. It contains extensive ancient remains, now covered for the most part by cultivated fields, of which Dr. Hoey has given the following account. "There is an abrupt rise at Makhdūm Shāh's *dargāh*, a little south of Harpur, which continues for a couple of miles south until it terminates somewhat more abruptly beyond Khwāja Pīr's Mazār. On the east of this elevated site runs a stream known locally by two names, Gandakī and Saryu. This is well defined, and may have been a channel made in ancient days for water-supply. West of this, and parallel to it, the high ground extends for an average width of not less than half a mile. As I passed from the northern end, I observed undulations with occasional very prominent heights, and noticed that cultivators have taken out numerous bricks while ploughing. On approaching the southern end I observed a pile near a mound, on which are the remains of a brick building. I learned that this pile is the Ganj-i-Shahīdān or martyr's heap near the traditional Rājā's *kot*. This indicates a desperate assault at some time on a Hindu stronghold. Further on, I came to Khwāja Pīr's Mazār, and two tombs in an open enclosure. In one corner there was a large black stone about 41 feet long, on which I observed Hindu sculptures of the Navagraha or nine planets. On the back of the slab there was a long inscription in Tughra character, of which I had not then the means of taking a rubbing. It is much worn and could not be read at sight. It is probably historically important. A few miles west by north of Sāran Khās is a village called Bhikaband on the map. I visited this spot also, and found that there is here a large banian tree, which is said to cover about ten acres. In the ground near there are brick remains and an old well lately reopened. Somewhat south-east of this is an old temple and the attendant Brāhmans wrote the name for me: Bhikaban, which is clearly the "Bhikshu's Grove." About a mile west of this are two villages bearing the name Kapia, which suggests the story of the service rendered to Buddha by the monkey (*kapi*) as mentioned by the later Chinese traveller." [W. Hoey, *Identification of Kusinārā, Vaisāli and other places*, J. A. S. B., 1900.]

Semariā.—A village in the headquarters subdivision situated 7 miles west of Chaprā, with a population, in 1901, of 2,967 persons. Originally, it is said, the place was situated at the junction of the Ganges and the Gogrā or Sarju, and was thus a sacred site to which Hindus came to bathe in large numbers. The two rivers now meet at Haldī, 10 miles east of Semariā, but a fair is still held here in November every year, on the same date as the Sonpur fair, *i.e.*, on the last day of the Hindu month of Kārtik. It is largely attended by women, and next to the Sonpur fair is the largest cattle-fair in the district. The great Hindu sage, Datā Traya, who had 24 *gurus*, is said to have lived here; and close by is Gautama Rishi's *asthān* or residence, on which a temple has been built.

Silhauri.—A village in the headquarters subdivision, situated about 2 miles north of the Mirzāpur outpost and 16 miles north-east of Chaprā, with a population, in 1901, of 956. It contains a temple of Mahādeo (Siva) to which the following legend attaches. A cultivator, it is said, in digging his field discovered a stone, from the top of which blood oozed out where it had been cut by his *kodāli*. The cultivator informed the villagers of the miracle, and they all tried to take out the stone, but the deeper they dug, the larger was the stone found to be. So they gave up the attempt, but at night they dreamed that it was not a stone, but the god Siva, by name Silānāth. A temple was then built on the spot, and the god received their worship. A fair lasting about a week is held here twice a year in February and April, when people flock in from great distances to worship the god, and to sell and buy cattle, miscellaneous goods, etc.

Siswān.—A village in the Siwān subdivision situated 21 miles south of Siwān and 25 miles west of Chaprā. It is a rising market, through which passes a large quantity of the grain imported into the district, especially that consigned to the markets of Chainpur and Ekmā. It is also a calling-place for steamers plying on the Gogrā, and contains a police outpost, District Board bungalow and a post office.

Siwān.—Headquarters of the subdivision of the same name, situated in 26° 13′ N. and 84° 21′ E. Siwān is also the headquarters of a Sub-Deputy Opium Agent, and besides the court of the Subdivisional Magistrate and Sub-Deputy Magistrate, the sub-jail, a police station and a sub-registry office, contains a Munsif's court, a dispensary, and a High school. A branch station of the Regions Beyond Mission has been established here since 1902. The population has more than doubled since the first census taken in 1872, and was 15,756 in 1901. The place

is also known as Alīganj Sewān and the railway station is called Savan.

Siwān is situated on the east bank of the river Dāhā, which is navigable in the rains. It is about 40 miles north-west of Chaprā, with which it is connected by the railway and by a good road. It has a reputation for the manufacture of superior pottery and brass work, but the manufacture has declined of late years. The former has attained more than a local reputation and attracted attention at the Indo-Colonial Exhibition in London in 1886; this reputation is deserved, for the work has a much higher finish than the ordinary productions of the native potter. This pottery is red or black-glazed as well as unglazed and porous, and is ornamented with patterns in gold or silver. The town is also known for the manufacture of articles made of a certain white metal, called *phul*, which is composed of copper and spelter, with a small admixture of zinc.

Siwān is the centre of a large grain trade, its importance having increased of late years with the advent of the railway. It contains a dāk bungalow, as well as a District Board inspection bungalow and a fine *sarai* or public rest-house erected by public subscription in 1887 to commemorate the Jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria. The town is clean and healthy.

Dr. Hoey is of opinion that Siwān is identical with Kusinārā, the scene of Buddha's death. He states that Buddha visited Pāva, the modern Papaur, where the goldsmith Kunda lived and was there served with *sukara*, *i.e.*, a bulbous root and not boar's flesh, as tradition usually asserts, which gave his illness a fatal turn. Dr. Hoey then goes on to say:—"This led him to resolve to push on to Kusinārā, and he set out with Ananda in that direction. He was then at least 80 years old and suffering from dysentery. He could not have travelled far, and we observe that the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta represents him as halting under a tree at least once and reaching a river with difficulty. The salient points in connection with his last brief journey are that he left Pāva, halted under a tree, moved on again to a stream called Kakuttha, and having crossed a river bearing a name suggestive of gold, he reached the people's park near Kusinārā and lay down under some *sāl* trees. Possibly he had not come to Kusinārā, because he sent Ananda to bring the Mallas to him. After his death there was an imposing ceremony to do honour to his remains. He was laid out on a golden bier and is said to have been kept for seven days; and it is said that he showed his feet from out his winding sheet, and he even raised himself and spoke. There was difficulty in moving his remains until Kāsyapa came. Thus the

spot where his bier rested was one that must have borne a name associated with it. That name is Siwān, the Sanskrit Savayana, a litter or bier. There is something in names.

"It is remarkable that we have a particular tree of great age at a mound near Siwān railway station. This is known as Jagattra, the Protector or Deliverer of the World. One would expect Hindus to venerate this spot, but they do not. They consider it ill-omened. The late Rājā of Hathwā desired to enclose all this spot, but the Pandits told him that the act would bring him bad luck. He enclosed a large patch, but left the tree outside the walls. He died soon after. This Jagattra is looked upon as the oldest place about Siwān, and its name and associations are significant. There is also a very high mound not far off, which has not been explored. I can have no doubt that Kusinārā lies somewhere close to Siwān, if it be not Siwān itself." About 3 miles to the north-west between Luhsi and Kalinjara is a large and ancient mound, which is popularly believed to be a fort of the Cheros. [W. Hoey, *Identification of Kusinārā, Vaisāli and other places*, J. A. S. B., 1900.]

Siwān Subdivision.—Central subdivision of the district lying between 25° 56′ and 26° 22′ N., and 84° 0′ and 84° 47′ E., with an area of 838 square miles. The subdivision is bounded on the west by the Gorakhpur district, on the north and north-west by the Gopālganj subdivision, on the east and south-east by the headquarters subdivision, and on the south by the river Gogrā extending from Dumrahar (near Guthnī) to Siswān. It forms an alluvial tract intersected by numerous rivers and water-channels, the most important of which are tributaries of the Gogrā, viz., the Jharahī and Dāhā. Other rivers in the subdivision are the Gandakī and Dhanai, which enter it at Madhopur and Barhogā respectively, and flow through it in a south-easterly direction. The population was 801,744 in 1901 as compared with 800,738 in 1891; it is the most densely populated part of the district and supports 957 persons to the square mile. It contains one town, Siwān, the headquarters, and 1,528 villages. The subdivision was created in 1848.

Sonpur.—A village in the headquarters subdivision situated in 25° 42′ N. and 85° 12′ E. on the right bank of the Gandak, close to its confluence with the Ganges. This is perhaps the most widely known place in the whole district, having more than a local reputation on account of a great fair held in the month of Kārtik, which is probably one of the oldest *melās* in Bengal.

The legend connected with the place is that it was the actual site at which, in prehistoric times, the fight ended between the lords of the forest and the water, Gaj and Garah, the elephant and

the crocodile. According to the Srīmat Bhāgabat, there was in olden times a vast lake round the Trikut hill, which had, as the name implies, three towering peaks, crowned with dense forest and infested by wild animals. In this lake lived a crocodile of enormous size; and one day when a huge elephant came with a herd to bathe there, the crocodile caught him by the leg and tried to drag him into deeper water. The struggle continued for thousands of years, all the crocodiles and elephants joining in the contest. At last, the elephant, beginning to weaken, prayed to the supreme god, Hari, to help him. His prayer was heard, and Hari saved him from the grip of the crocodile in the presence of Hara and other gods.

According to Hindu mythology, the crocodile had in a former life been a Gandharva chief, named Huhu, who came to bathe in this lake with a party of Gandharva women, and in playful sport caught by the leg a holy sage, named Dewala Muni, who had also come there to bathe. Enraged at this familiarity, the sage cursed the Gandharva chief, who thereupon was turned into a crocodile. Thenceforward, he lived in the lake in the repulsive form of a crocodile, until he was restored to his Gandharva life by the sacred touch of Vishnu (Hari), who with his discus (*chakra*) cut the throat of the crocodile while delivering the elephant from his jaws. The elephant, on the other hand, was, in his former existence, a king of Pāndya, Indradyumna by name, who was a very pious man of a contemplative turn of mind. One day, while absorbed in deep meditation, the powerful sage, Agastya, appeared before him; but the king did not notice his presence, and the latter, piqued at this indifference, condemned him to assume the form of an elephant. He, too, after long suffering, was saved by Hari as described above, and was allowed to accompany him to the high heaven of Baikuntha.

A temple, it is said, was subsequently built on the spot by Rāma, when on his way to Janakpur to win Sita. It was dedicated to Harihar Nāth Mahādeo, and being largely frequented by pilgrims, a fair was established, called the *Harihar Chhattra Melā*. The temple of Harihar Nāth Mahādeo is the principal place of worship, but several smaller temples also receive the offerings of pilgrims. Among these are the *Kālī Asthān* and the *Pānch Devatā Mandil;* the latter is presided over by a priestess, who claims to have built the temple with the offerings she received.

Sonpur is considered a place of exceptional holiness, and the *Gangā-snān*, or ceremonial bathing in the Ganges, unusually efficacious. But the great attraction of the place is the fair,

which is largely attended both by Europeans and natives. The fair lasts for a fortnight, but is at its height for two days before and two days after the bathing in the Ganges on the day of the full moon. Immense numbers assemble:—as many as 300,000 persons have been known to attend:—and the fair extends about three miles from north to south and two miles from east to west. Goods of the most heterogeneous description and large numbers of cattle, horses and elephants are sold by Kābuli, up-country and local dealers; it is, in fact, one of the largest elephant markets in India, hundreds of elephants being brought for sale. Special sanitary precautions are always taken on this occasion, to prevent the outbreak of epidemic disease, and arrangements are made for the safeguarding of the elephants.

To the European the Sonpur fair is better known as being the occasion of one of the most agreeable social gatherings to be found in the Province. A large camp is held in a magnificent grove, and the visitors amuse themselves with a gymkhāna, dances, polo, tennis and visits to the fair, which presents Indian life under many interesting aspects. Besides a large ball-room, there are a fine race-course and race-stands, for the Sonpur meet used to be an important race meeting at which some of the best race horses on this side of India ran. Many causes, especially the decline of the indigo industry and other race meetings in more central places, have combined to put a stop to the races, and a large polo meet now takes their place. Until 1839 the races were run at Hājīpur, but owing to the river cutting away the bank, it was necessary to choose a fresh site, and the present track was laid out on the Sāran side of the Gandak at Sonpur, where the first races were run that year.

Sonpur is also an important junction on the Bengal and North-Western Railway, and is the headquarters of the District Traffic and Locomotive Departments. There are large railway workshops here, and more land is being acquired for quarters for the European staff. The village contains a police station and a sub-registry office, and has a population, according to the census of 1901, of 3,355 persons. Close by is the Gandak railway bridge, which connects the Bengal and North-Western Railway and Tirhut State Railway systems. It was opened by the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, in March 1887, and is 2,176 feet long; it is built of eight spans of 250 feet clear, and has two broad pathways for foot passengers. In consequence of the great rapidity of the Gandak when in flood, and the unstable nature of its bed, this bridge is justly regarded as a triumph of engineering skill. [Harry Abbott, *Sonepore Reminiscences*, Calcutta, 1896.]

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